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The Washington Monthly

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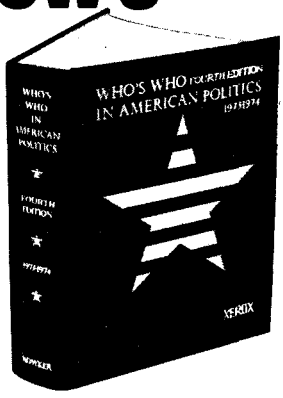

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Published monthly except combined July-August issue by The Washington Monthly Company, 1028 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions—$12.95, one year; $20, two years; $30, three years. Foreign, including Canada, $1.50 per year additional, surface; air mail rates available on request. Back issues $1.50. Send all remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to 1028 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Printed by The William Byrd Press, Inc., Richmond, Va.

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. and additional offices.

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DECEMBER 1973

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Letters

Morality of Medicine

As a businessman and as a friend and admirer of Dean Ebert, I was disappointed in your article ["The Morality of Medicine" by David Ignatius, October] criticizing his consulting relationship with Squibb Corporation.

We tried to explain to your reporter in some detail that the Mysteclin-F matter, like so many other issues of drug efficacy, involved complex questions of benefits versus risks, questions on which medical experts could legitimately disagree.We earnestly endeavored to convey our point of view—totally disregarded in your article—that pharmaceutical companies had a right, indeed a duty, to retain the best possible medical counsel to help them develop and review their products.

By choosing to ignore this point, you seemed to imply that there was something sinister about our having highly regarded medical scientists serving as consultants. Are you suggesting that, if we had set our sights lower and been satisfied with second-rate medical counsel, there would have been no issue of propriety at all? In any event, Squibb doesn't settle for second best, and I think most consumers are glad we don't. We intend to continue to get the very best advice we can from non-industry scientists to supplement our own experts.

Furthermore, you unquestionably accepted the negative opinion on Mysteclin-F reportedly rendered by a Food and Drug Administration advisory panel. Just what makes you think that these unidentified panelists are absolutely right and Squibb scientists and the outside experts advising us are absolutely wrong? Even after your short exposure to this question, you should have learned that these are highly complex matters on which competent scientists can legitimately differ. In this case, where there is no question as to the safety of the product or as to its efficacy (it cures the people it purports to cure) or as to the fact that it does mitigate a well-known side effect of tetracycline therapy (reduction of the growth of monilial organisms) and where the only question is the clinical significance in certain patients of this reduction of monilial growth, the issue is particularly intricate from a scientific point of view. But it is hardly a question of consumer protection in any generally accepted sense.

What is most disturbing to me about your article is that it seems to be based on the assumption that in a controversy between the government and a group of its citizens (if you grant that Squibb consists for this purpose of its citizen employees and shareholders) the government is bound to be right.

RICHARD M. FURLAUD
New York, N. Y.

Richard Furlaud is president of the Squibb Corporation.

The editor replies:

We would hardly criticize Squibb's determination to obtain the best medical advice. But it is disingenuous to claim that the Mysteclin-F case—in which Squibb retained the dean of Harvard Medical School, who had not himself participated in the drug trials and who had no special expertise on the topic, to endorse the drug before the government panel—fits the category of enlisting "the best medical counsel to help them develop and review their products." It is also significant that the second doctor testifying for Squibb was not the researcher who developed the drug, or the physician who supervised the field trials, but Lewis Thomas, dean of the Yale Medical School. There must be other doctors Squibb could have turned to if it really had been looking for scientific excellence rather than the implied support of the nation's two most prestigious medical schools.

Right to Read

Your September 1973 article, "Right to

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Read: Lost in PR" [by Wallace Roberts], is extremely misleading. The author gives the impression that the entire Right To Read program was wrapped up in the National Reading Center.

To set the record straight, the NRC was a very small segment of the Right To Read effort. It was, in fact, closed June 30, 1973, but the nationwide Right To Read program of the U. S. Office of Education is still very much alive and has assumed the responsibilities previously delegated to the NRC.

By its nature, and original statement of purpose, the NRC was indeed PR (*public relations*) oriented. As far as OE's Right To Read effort is concerned, however, PR stands for *program results*.

Some 240 school based and community based Right To Read sites now serve almost every state in the nation. Thirty-one states have been funded to develop Right To Read programs statewide. In September the OE announced a nationwide search to identify, validate, and disseminate as many as 25 top reading programs so that all schools and communities can take advantage of their successes.

Right To Read is coordinating the investment of nearly $500 million by various units of the Office of Education that operate reading, or reading related, programs. In addition, Right To Read has $14.2 million of its own to continue in Fiscal Year 1974 its selective investment in promising sites and the dissemination and installation of good practices.

S. P. MARLAND, Jr.
Washington, D. C.

S. P. Marland is a former Assistant Secretary for Education for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

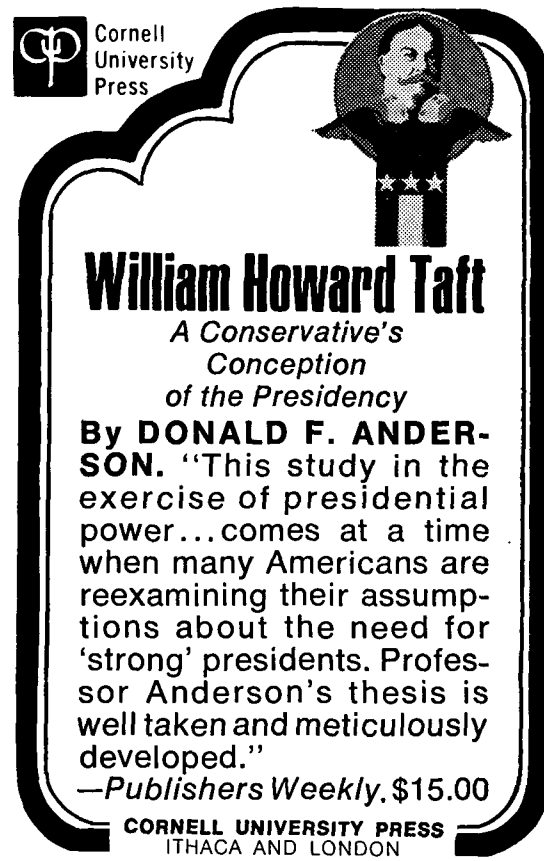
Stagflation

I read with a good deal of interest your October piece, "The Great Stagflation Machine" [by James Fallows], and you make one hell of a persuasive case, as well as writing in a most entertaining way.

I was about to write and apologize to all the taxpayers unto posterity for fathering the "Udall Amendment" and bringing on all of its evil consequences, until I read a piece by Milton Friedman who says that the best way to fight inflation is to have more escalator clauses and other types of "Udall Amendments."

MORRIS K. UDALL
Washington, D. C.

Morris Udall is a U.S. Representative from Arizona.



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Agribusiness

I would like to commend Jim Hightower's excellent article, "The Case for the Small Farmer" [September]. However, I disagree with him that a return to the free market would spell disaster for small farmers. On the contrary, a free market would be the best thing that could happen to them, and to consumers and taxpayers too.

As Mr. Hightower argues, small and medium-sized farmers operate considerably more efficiently than the big agribusiness corporations. They must be more efficient to survive at all in the face of the big corporations' government-granted advantages in farm subsidy programs and tax loopholes. These special favors also inflate the price of land, further injuring small farmers who must buy land to enter farming or expand operations—since the banks give them credit only on unfavorable terms if at all. A genuine free market would eliminate the big corporations' unfair advantages, giving small farmers a chance to thrive. I suspect that by a "free market" Mr. Butz means something different, perhaps a market in which big corporations can freely invoke government power to clobber the competition. If he really does mean a free market, then let us encourage his delusion.

A glance at the history of government interference in agriculture bears out my point. It should not surprise readers of *The Washington Monthly* that New Deal price support legislation was written by big farmers—notably the Farm Bureau Federation—for big farmers, and at the expense of small farmers, consumers, and taxpayers. Of course, the plight of the small farmer, then as now, drew many a crocodile tear.

New Deal legislation authorizing producers' cartels under so-called "marketing orders" was likewise designed and used by the giants against their small competition. For example, marketing order legislation ostensibly empowered small growers to organize against the kind of large packing houses that dominate the Sunkist citrus "coop." Yet Sunkist itself invoked the citrus marketing orders to enforce cartel discipline on competitors who threatened to take an increasing share of Sunkist's market. Milk marketing orders have squeezed out small dairymen across the country, and entertained us with the well-financed intrigues of the Associated Milk Producers, Inc.

Of course, many small farmers do enthusiastically support the federal farm programs. It is hard to convince a man who feels absolutely dependent on that $500 check from the government that he is actually worse off—land and credit cost more, crop prices are lower—because the same program gives $50,000 to Farmer Brown, Inc. down the road. Yet by raising land prices and attracting "tax farmers" the programs quietly take more from the small farmer than they give him. As rural sociologist Charles M. Hardin puts it, "The windfalls to the wealthy may well be politically sustained by the pittances to the poor."

Finally, what about the argument advanced by Mr. Hightower and many USDA officials that an end to government control of agriculture would release a flood of produce, swamping the markets, driving down prices, and putting small farmers out of business? Back in the 1950s and '60s, there would have been a grain of truth to this argument. The farm programs had stimulated substantial overproduction, in the sense that farmers were producing more than they could sell at artificially high support prices. The government then stored the excess or "dumped" it abroad. A sudden end to price supports, production controls, and government purchases would indeed have caused a catastrophic drop in prices. But in these days of soaring commodity prices, booming agricultural exports, and high farm profits, we can safely quit worrying about overproduction. In fact, there could hardly be a better time to get Uncle Sam off the farm.

Small farmers do have a problem, one they share with many other American citizens: low income. I think we should raise incomes directly, without singling out farmers for special attention, perhaps with a guaranteed minimum income. Of course, in a country that commends subsidies to property but condemns subsidies to people, a guaranteed minimum income lacks political palatability. Perhaps we could call it "income insurance." But, with or without a minimum income, I feel confident that an end to the government programs and to the more egregious tax loopholes would effectively halt the exodus of all but the smallest farmers. More than that, such reforms would lead many big corporations to sell off their holdings, while many small and medium-sized farmers would actually *return* to the land.

POLLY ROBERTS,
Berkeley, Calif.

Polly Roberts is the author of the farm subsidy section of the Nader report, Power and Land in California.

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Death on the Road: Going Beyond Nader and the Reader's Digest

by James Fallows

"Daddy had to go up to see Grandfather Follet," their mother explained. "He says to kiss both of you for him and he'll probably see you before you're asleep tonight."

"When?" Rufus asked.

"Way, early this morning, before it was light."

"Why?"

"Grampa Follet is very sick. Uncle Ralph phoned up very late last night. . . . He wanted very much to see Daddy, just as quick as Daddy could come."

James Agee
A Death in the Family

A tan bullet comes hurtling down the road. Strapped inside is a man I know, a physician, specialist in diseases of the heart. Twenty times a day he listens and probes, observing the signs of age as they appear in his patients' flesh. He too grows older, and, as if to erase in himself what he sees in others, he pushes himself hard. When he was younger he would play tennis, sweating in the sun each noon. Now he rides bicycles and horses, eats lean, does not smoke. He is a disciple of Paul Dudley White; he will not permit his body to fail him. He is as hard as a man far younger. I sometimes expect that I will slip into decrepitude long before this older friend of mine.

There is hardly an evening when he is not called from his house to the hospital or another scene of disaster, real or imagined. He strides, smiling, toward the car, skipping down the front steps and waving to his family if they are still awake. Then he climbs into his vehicle and careens like a maniac into the night.

A few minutes before 10, the phone rang. Mary hurried to quiet it. "Hello?"

The voice was a man's, wiry and faint, a country voice. It was asking a question, but she could not hear it clearly.

"Hello?" she asked again. "Will you please talk a little louder?". . . Now, straining and impatient, she could hear, though the voice seemed still to come from a great distance.

"Is this Miz Jay Follet?"

"Yes; what is it?" (for there was a silence); "yes, this is she."

After further silence, the voice said, "There's been a slight. . . your husband has been in an accident."

His head! she told herself.

James Fallows is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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"Yes," she said, in a caved-in voice. At the same moment the voice said, "A serious accident."

The wife of my friend the doctor lost her father in a car crash in 1930, when she was three years old. What can we know of the terror she feels when the phone rings, and, this time, it is her husband who is away too long? To know we would have to live with that half-second of *certainty*, the naked moment before rationality can smother alarm, the accumulated panic of 43 years reaching up to shake her roughly and turn her face towards disaster and tell her, yes, this is what you've feared all along, you thought that by ignoring it you could make it go away, but you see now how close it must dwell to the surface if it can escape through the smallest fissure of suspicion.

This woman is hardly unique in her apprehension. Yet the political—and especially intellectual—efforts to prevent what she fears are minimal. She can read in her magazines about world affairs and political trends, but not about violent death. We must understand this blind spot if we hope to reduce our losses on the roads.

Each year 55,000 people are killed in traffic accidents in this country, 10,000 injured every day, two million seriously disabled in a year. The comparisons are familiar but still striking: more of our citizens are killed on the roads in one year than died in Vietnam during a dozen years of fighting. Accidents are the third leading cause of death in the United States, and the 1971 totals indicate the disproportionate role of traffic fatalities: of the 115,000 people killed by all forms of accidental injury (many experts prefer the term "trauma," since "accident" implies that the deaths were merely the result of bad luck), 55,000 died on the roads.

This figure alone tells us that a lot of people are being killed. However, it has a greater significance: unlike cancer and heart disease, traffic deaths are largely preventable. We are doing very little about a kind of epidemic we have the power to control, while we pour our energies and resources into the research of diseases we don't yet know how to cure or prevent.

"On the basis of our present knowledge, it is probably true that a dollar spent in this area [treatment of traumatic injury] would bring a greater return in the prevention of death and disability than a dollar spent in any other way," according to Dr. Henry Huntley, former head of the division of Emergency Medical Services in the Department of Health Education, and Welfare. This is so because we need neither new inventions nor enormous investments of capital in order to save many of the people now killed by trauma. One good illustration is the country's ambulance services and hospital emergency rooms. The experts already know what needs to be done to improve the emergency system and agree that the cost would be relatively modest. Dr. Huntley estimates that even with no reduction in the number or severity of accidental injuries, improving emergency care could reduce traffic fatalities by 15 to 20 per cent, and save a total (including other accident victims) of 60,000 lives each year. Dr. William Fitts of the University of Pennsylvania, editor of *The Journal of Trauma*, adds, "In the treatment of accidental injury, the gap between what can be done and what is being done is wider than for any other [area]," and Dr. J. Finton Speller, Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has said:

> President Nixon's war on cancer is a gamble in two respects—ultimate success rests on the hope that we will discover scientific principles now unknown, and there is no way of guessing how many lives will eventually be saved. . . . To declare war on unnecessary death in the ditch, in the ambulance, and in the emergency department is no gamble at all.

Why, then, have we refused to bet on the sure thing? And why, when so

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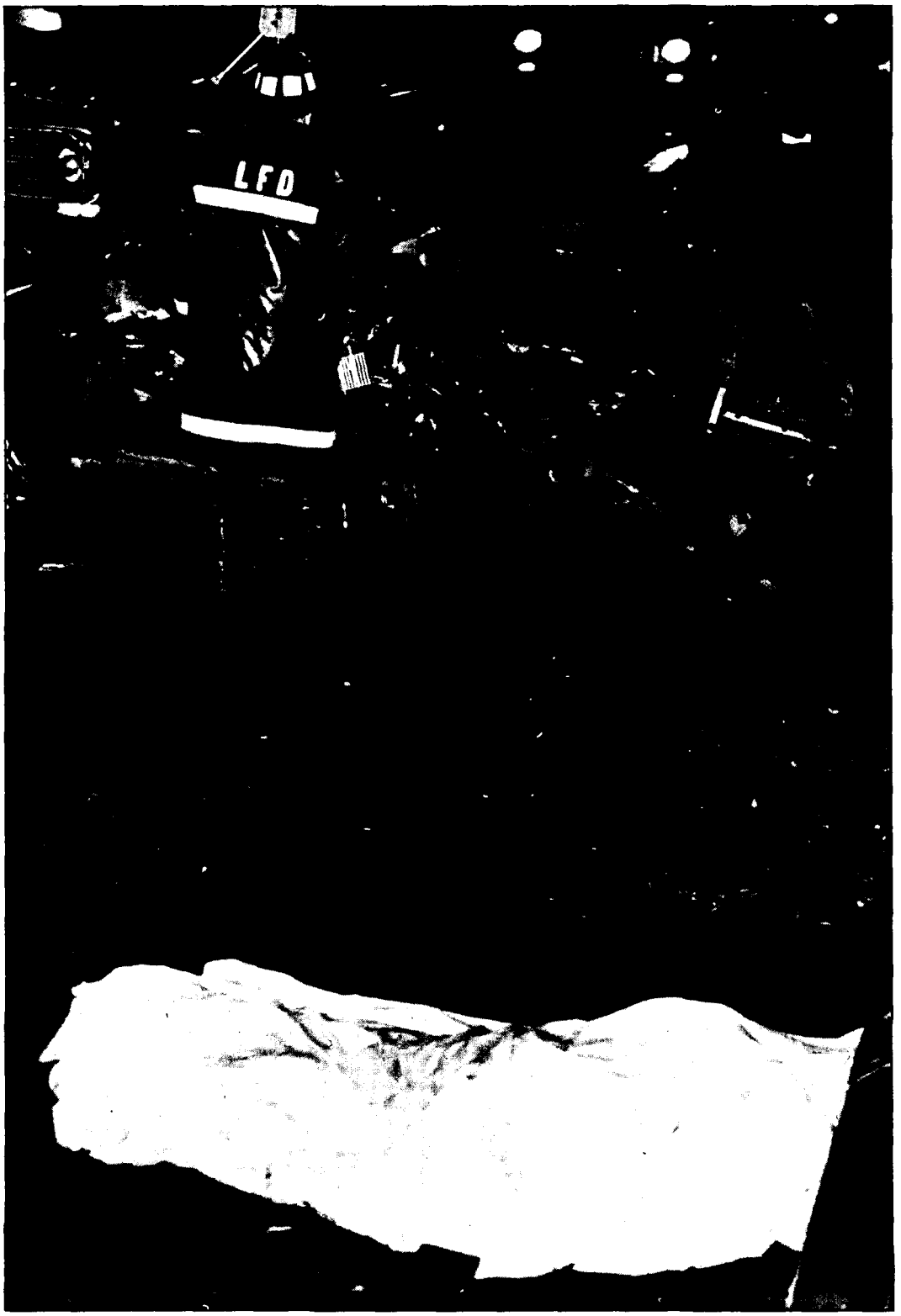

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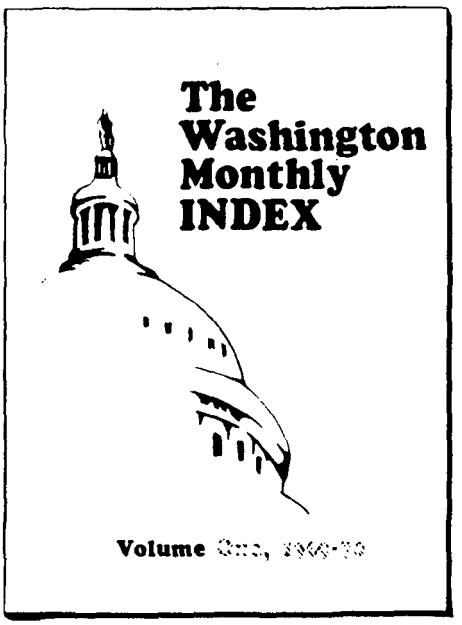

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much has been written about other kinds of preventable self-destruction (pollution, for example), has reporting on traffic death prevention been left to magazines like *Parade* and *Reader's Digest*?

Thank Hugh

When *Unsafe at Any Speed* by Ralph Nader was published in 1966, the public finally grasped what safety experts had been groping at for 20 years: the design of car and road might have more influence on crashes and on the severity of the injuries that follow than do the drivers themselves. Evidence leading to this conclusion had surfaced in experiments begun during the 1940s by a Cornell researcher named Hugh De Haven. When he was a pilot in the first World War, De Haven was puzzled by the seeming illogic of airplane injuries. Some human bodies withstood remarkable amounts of shock without permanent injury, while others were severely damaged by apparently moderate amounts of force. Later, in his Cornell experiments, De Haven isolated at least two factors that determined whether or not a victim was seriously injured—whether the body was "cushioned" inside the vehicle, and how the impact was absorbed over time and distance (that is, whether the car decelerated from 50 mph all in one instant) or was stopped more slowly by caroming through a series of impacts). A later pioneer in this field, Dr. J. R. Stapp, belted himself into rocket sleds to quantify the thresholds of human physiological endurance. In 1955 he demonstrated that, properly restrained, the human body could withstand a deceleration from 632 miles per hour to zero within 1.4 seconds, a force far more extreme than that involved in most fatal collisions.

During the 1960s, the American space program contributed additional data on how the body endured stress, but some of the most important extensions of De Haven's work were

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being done by Dr. William Haddon, Jr., a physician who directed the federal government's highway safety agencies from 1966 to 1969 and is now president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.*

One of the most provocative IIHS studies indicated that people should be able to survive many of the impacts that now are fatal. The basic scientific data indicated that under ideal conditions humans can endure forces as great as 45 g's (45 times the force of gravity) for very short periods of time. From this, Haddon has produced graphs showing that crashes in which the victim decelerates from 50 mph to zero in less than three feet need not be fatal, if the victim is protected from the steering wheel, the windshield, and the other hazards involved in the "second collision" of driver with car.

The public seems not to have followed the implications of this work as easily as it understood Nader's graphic portrayal of the Corvair going out of control and causing a crash. To accept Haddon's suggestion that most collisions were unnecessarily fatal meant rejecting the experience of three generations in which people had been killed while traveling only 20 or 30 mph. Partly, too, as in the early days of the environmental movement, the public mistook the vulnerability introduced by human engineering for nature's own frailty.

Copernicus at the Wheel

Meanwhile, a different group of scientists was also making discoveries that upset traditional ideas about accidental fatalities. Articles began to appear in medical journals suggesting that those who died after collisions might have suffered their most severe trauma not in the car but in an ambulance or in a poorly equipped emergency room. Conditions were set for a classic scientific revolution, a change as fundamental and, in its own way as important, as the Copernican theory of the universe or Columbus' challenge to the flat-world theory. Scientific revolutions* often follow a period of ferment, a time when the old theories cannot explain observed phenomena, and that is what was happening in traffic safety.

The old-school approach to accident prevention had changed very little since 1936, when the National Safety Council introduced its familiar slogan, "If you drive, don't drink; if you drink, don't drive." But even before that, in the first years of the century, when the first connection between alcohol and collisions was being made, what would become the standard theory of safety was developed—defect, mainly human, causes crashes, therefore defect must be eliminated.

Men like Stapp and Haddon might have succeeded by now in changing safety theory from subjective to scientific if they had been able to challenge the old school on its central premise, that drivers "cause" crashes. If only science could have shown that the cars actually did cause most accidents, that the driver was not to blame, that death hung over us like the ball at the lip of the roulette wheel and could drop as indiscriminately. If so, public attention might already have turned to the other strategies for reducing injury.

But the facts wouldn't fit this pattern. Even the scientists most dismayed by the traditional approach to traffic safety acknowledged that the driver usually "causes" the crash. Alcohol, in the words of the authoritative government report issued in

*The IIHS story proves that "enlightened self-interest" is not purely a concept from the world of fantasy. Under Haddon's direction the Institute has undertaken some of the most creative and influential research in the field. The research is paid for by many of the nation's largest insurance companies. "It's the insurers' traditional role," Haddon says. "When Lloyds of London was insuring sailing ships it made sure to support lighthouse construction. At their best, that's what our companies are doing now."

*I am borrowing here from Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, one book all non-scientists should read.

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1968, "has been found to be the largest single factor leading to fatal crashes." The influence of age and sex is also too clear to deny. Males have more crashes than females; those 18 to 19 have more than anyone else. According to Susan P. Baker of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, males aged 15 to 24 "have an exceptionally high death-to-injury rate, suggesting that a larger proportion of their injuries are severe (suggesting, in turn, that their crashes are more severe)."

What, then, is wrong with the "nut-behind-the-wheel" approach if the facts seem so irrefutable? In one of his technical papers, Haddon explained:

> There is no logical reason why the rank order (or priority) of loss-reduction countermeasures. . . must parallel the sequence, or rank order, of causes contributing to the result of damaged people or property.

The importance of Haddon's statement is this: the two most important causes of crashes—alcohol and the hot blood of youth—are the two least possible to control. Even during Prohi-

"He'd crawl to the

The Washington ambulance service is run by the fire department. There are no permanent ambulancemen. All the firemen have to serve one year on an ambulance some time during their first five years of service and almost all of them hate it, in spite of the extra $600 that goes with the job. There are 10 ambulances in the city.

We were racing through the city, shooting red lights and hooting at the drivers scrambling to get out of the way. The threatening "wee-ow wee-ow" of the siren throws everyone on the street into confusion, sends shivers and thrills down the spine. The driver, Mallory, is enjoying himself. There is just time to catch fleeting glimpses of bystanders frozen in curious attitudes, hands to their ears, or the fear in their eyes, or two fingers of contempt jerked up at the men in uniform.

All that was known about this run was the word "seizure" and an address scrawled on a card by the man in the firehouse who had taken the telephone message from the central dispatchers. It turned out to be at the top of a big office block." Once we arrived at the address the ambulancemen forgot the speed of the drive and began to dawdle. After the ride through the city it was agonizing to watch them climb down so slowly, open the back of the van, chat with the doorman, make jokes as they fumbled while pulling the stretcher out on its wheels. "What floor, buddy?" asked Mallory, who seemed to take control of every situation. We squeezed into the narrow elevator and shot up nine floors. Office staff were waiting at the top in great agitation, and we pushed our way through to a back room where a plain young white girl was lying on two chairs looking dazed and embarrassed. She was loaded clumsily onto the stretcher while the ambulancemen took her particulars from a nervous manager. They enjoyed being the center of attention, the big guys who could cope with any situation, and they threw out various medical terms which sounded impressive. They played the part well, but too lengthily.

After leaving the girl at the

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bition alcohol was a major cause of fatal crashes, and since then there has been virtually no indication that any socially acceptable anti-alcohol campaigns make a significant difference. As Susan Baker has said of the problem of violence among young males, "The comparatively high death and injury rates noted for males suggest the role of behavioral factors, some of them probably innate." But none of this should discourage us if, as Haddon recommends, we are looking for the best ways to reduce loss rather than obsessively working to eradicate the causes (which, of course, we should keep trying to understand).

Haddon's scientific revolution, represented in the phrase "loss reduction," may best be explained by analogy. For years, such communicable diseases as cholera, typhoid, and polio were thought to be "caused" by defective human behavior: we were not careful enough in what we ate or what strangers we permitted to contaminate our air or water. The advent of scientific public health marked a change in the question doctors asked, from "How is this disease spread?" to

hospital first."

hospital we drove back slowly to the firehouse, stopping on the way for Newman to mail a letter. It was hard for them to get used to driving without the siren, to stopping for lights and people, but they compensated with a great deal of hooting and yelling at drivers. "Hey, are you squeamish?" Mallory called back to me with a loud laugh. Newman giggled. "I don't know yet," I said nervously.

Back in the firehouse the other firemen laughed. "She doesn't know if she's squeamish?" They began swapping horror stories from the time when they had been on ambulance duty: the doctor who got caught between an elevator and the shaft "and there was nothing left but a pile of meat to scrape off the walls"; a woman who committed suicide by opening an elevator door, putting her head out, and pressing the button, "her head was on the top floor and the rest of her was in the basement." Mallory said that last week on another ambulance in that district, an inexperienced ambulanceman had put a tourniquet around a man's neck, "you guessed already, he was dead on arrival." They all roared with laughter and looked at me to see how I was taking it.

"*Am*-bulance, *am*-bulance," drawled the loudspeaker. Mallory poured the rest of his can of Coke down his long body and munched up the last of his Hershey bar. Firemen eat all day long. We drove off with sirens and lights. This time it was an address in one of the better parts of the ghetto, a small detached house with a big front porch with an old rocking chair. We came into the main bedroom. A thin, tiny, old black woman was standing with tremendous dignity and calm by the bed, where an enormously fat, pop-eyed, gray-haired man was lying in a pair of green pajamas. The woman explained quietly and efficiently that he had a history of heart trouble, diabetes, arthritis, and gout, and that he was in great pain. "Is that right, buddy? You been throwing up blood?" Mallory asked. The woman explained that he was deaf as well. She asked that he be taken to the hospital where his records

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"How can we best minimize its damage?" The answer, once attention was untethered from seeking the simple "cause" of the problem, could include such responses as mass immunization, the construction of sewers, the testing of public food supplies.

In a series of papers which stretch from the mid-sixties through the last few years, Haddon laid the groundwork for a similar approach to violent death. Using the term "energy damage" to define such varied occurrences as a head-on collision and the detonation of a nuclear bomb, he has composed a menu of 10 "countermeasure strategies":

1) prevent the "marshaling" of the destructive energy—keep the nuclear bomb from being built, the baby from climbing on top of the table, the car from taking the road.

2) reduce the amount of energy so marshaled—build smaller bombs or firecrackers, put fewer aspirin tablets in each bottle, reduce the speed of cars.

3) prevent the release of energy—keep the bomb from dropping, the suicide from jumping, the car from

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were. "He goes to that clinic," she said. Mallory misunderstood her, "Ma'am, we ain't taking no one to no clinic appointment," he snapped.

Mallory said the man would be taken to the nearest hospital that would have him. The two ambulancemen and a policeman, who had arrived on the scene before us, humped the old man awkwardly onto a special stretcher to which he could be strapped and held upright to get him down the narrow stairs. Newman, another one of the ambulance attendants, grumbled loudly about his bad back. "He's so heavy. My God he's heavy," they groaned and complained, as if the man who was groaning too was dead and not right there beneath them. No one spoke to him. The patients never got spoken to on the way to the hospital—not a comforting word or a try at conversation to take their minds off things. They were just lumps of meat to be transported and talked about as if they were dead.

A friend or relation is allowed to travel in the back of the ambulance with the patient, but mostly the patients travel alone. There is no one to see how they get treated on the way. If they fall off the stretcher as the van spins round a corner and the ambulanceman doesn't catch them, a very common occurrence, there is no one to see or complain.

When I hear the squeal and screech of sirens now, I don't think of dying people for whom each second is precious, being given oxygen, gently tended by concerned ambulancemen fighting for a life. I think of poor, ill, tired, drunk old men, unconscious girls, frail old people being hurled off their stretchers because the driver gets a kick out of shooting lights, stopping all the other traffic, being a law unto himself. And what better excuse—he's driving an ambulance. I didn't see one case where the use of sirens and flashing lights, the violent driving, resulted in anything but more suffering to the patient. The thrill was in the driving, not the saving lives.

It was Newman who said to me, "No ambulanceman would ever call an ambulance. He'd crawl to the hospital first."

—Polly Toynbee

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crashing.

4) modify the release-over-space of the energy—deflect the avalanche with trees and trails, let the car hit a movable barrier instead of a fixed object.

5) separate the energy release from the potential victims—take the Bikini Islanders off their atoll and the pedestrians out of the road.

6) insert a material barrier between the energy and the victim—provide helmets for football players, nets for acrobats, padding for cars.

7) modify the contact surface—use cardboard sticks instead of wooden ones for lollipops, take the daggers off car grilles and the protruding screws from their interiors.

8) strengthen the structure that will absorb the energy—build stronger bomb shelters and make buildings fireproof, vaccinate against smallpox, reinforce car bodies.

9) identify and treat the damage as soon as possible—send out a fire truck, get the crash victim to the hospital.

10) restore as much of the damage as possible after the emergency treatment—repair the gutted building, let the broken bones knit.

With this list a door opens, things fall into place. We see how much we had ignored before and sense that even if we can't get rid of the drunken drivers and the Corvairs, we may have a chance of surviving when they come careening into our cars. A few loss-reduction devices have already been installed in cars—steering columns, for example, designed not to puncture the aorta upon hitting the driver's torso. In cars made before 1967, those with rigid steering columns, impacts of 50 mph were fatal 50 per cent of the time and inflicted "serious injuries" on the other 50 per cent of the victims. With collapsible steering columns, a 50-mph impact leaves 20 per cent of the drivers uninjured, 60 per cent with minor injuries, and the rest with only moderate injuries. On some highways, breakaway pilings for roadside lamps and signs, instead of rigid posts designed to preserve the sign at the cost of the driver's life, are now being installed. "That such poles have been thoroughly tested and introduced in a few areas and shown to be practical, effective, and competitive in cost," says Haddon, "indicates that virtually any death in a pole impact at virtually any impact speed is completely unnecessary."

A new highway just opened in the District of Columbia, the "Center Leg Freeway," carries this and other improvements to the roadside environment a step further by installing "impact attenuators." "It's the latest concept in preventing personal injury," the city's traffic engineer, George W. Schoene, has said. "Damage will still be done to the vehicle, but any serious injury to the driver will be minimized. When the car hits the attenuator, the black cells with mushroom-like tops pop out one at a time, spraying water everywhere."

'I Love You Anyway'

Other innovations are the springy bumpers on late-model cars—intended more to eliminate the $200 bill for the two-mph collision than to prevent serious injury—and seat belts, installed first as options, then as requirements, now equipped with buzzers, and soon to be connected to an "interlock" system that will prevent the car from moving if the belts are not fastened. Public enthusiasm for safety belts does not mirror their proven worth. Ralph Nader estimates that five per cent of all drivers wear the belts, and while other surveys produce figures in the 10 to 15 percent range, no one contends that more than a handful of drivers use the simple device that cuts fatality rates in half. Even the warning buzzer has not made a difference. The most graphic evidence of its failure came from IIHS researchers who looked through cars at the Department of Transportation's own parking lot and found that a large number of drivers had de-activated their buzzers. Still, the belts are credited with what reduction there has been in traffic

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deaths, from 56,000 to 54,700 between 1969 and 1971.

Several of the IIHS studies have tried to uncover the reasons for this seemingly suicidal refusal to use seat belts. In 1971 the investigators produced six television advertisements promoting seat belt use. The films were designed to play on what earlier studies had identified as the strongest incentive for wearing belts, the fear not of death but of disfigurement and crippling injuries. The experimenters' own description of one of the films conveys their flavor:

> A woman whose face cannot be seen is shown in front of a mirror applying make-up. A full-face picture on her dressing table shows her as a beautiful woman. Her husband enters and suggests that they go to a party. She asks him not to look at her without make-up as she turns to reveal a scarred face. . . . The announcer continues, as the picture on the table is shown, "Terry would still look like this if she had been wearing a safety belt. . . . It's much easier to wear safety belts than to hear your husband say, 'Honey, I love you anyway.' "

For nine months the six messages were shown to half the households in a community supplied with cable TV. Meanwhile, the investigators were observing the drivers who wore seat belts and then tracing their license numbers to determine whether they had seen the messages. At the end of the study the investigators had a conclusion of unmistakable clarity: "The campaign had no effect whatsoever on seat-belt use." A more recent experiment testing the effect of the buzzer system had similar results: "The evidence presented here indicates that the buzzer-light system had no statistically significant effect on the safety-belt use rate."

Now here are findings to give us pause. Doubtless they point us toward our complicated attitudes about automobiles and, ultimately, the risk of death. But to the loss-reduction engineers they indicate an absolutely clear-cut course of action: seat belts don't work, so we need airbags, and better roads, and emergency care, and a lot more.

It is equally important to remove the more grotesque hazards now built into the cars. Earlier this year the IIHS test-crashed cars to see how they hold up during impact. Six 1973 model cars were slammed at speeds of 30 to 40 mph into the tail ends of other new cars, which were parked. In all six cases the gas tank of the parked car ruptured, in one case spontaneously engulfing both vehicles in flames, and offering the potential for fire in all the others. Except for the fires, rear-end crashes at this speed would cause little injury. But when the test vehicles did catch fire, the dummies inside were horribly charred. The best estimates are that between 2,000 and 3,500 people each year are cremated inside their cars after collisions they otherwise might have survived. In that light, the IIHS tests make the government's recent decision to delay once more standards for rupture-proof tanks, this time until 1976, appear reprehensible at the very best.

One-Stop Service

Even after the crash and its injuries have taken place, there are ways of reducing the casualties. For quick results, nothing could go farther toward reducing violent death—not a new wave of Prohibition, not denying licenses to those under 25, not mandatory seat belts or super-safety vehicles—than improving emergency care.

Two studies, one in Michigan and one in California, suggest why. Dr. Charles Frey took the records of 159 accident fatalities in Michigan and tried to determine the conditions contributing to their deaths. In 29 of the cases he concluded that the victims could have not only survived the injuries, but also returned to full, normal lives—if they had received adequate emergency care. Another nine could have had a good chance of survival. That's a total of 38, or nearly 25 per cent who died because they couldn't get care in time.

The California investigation was

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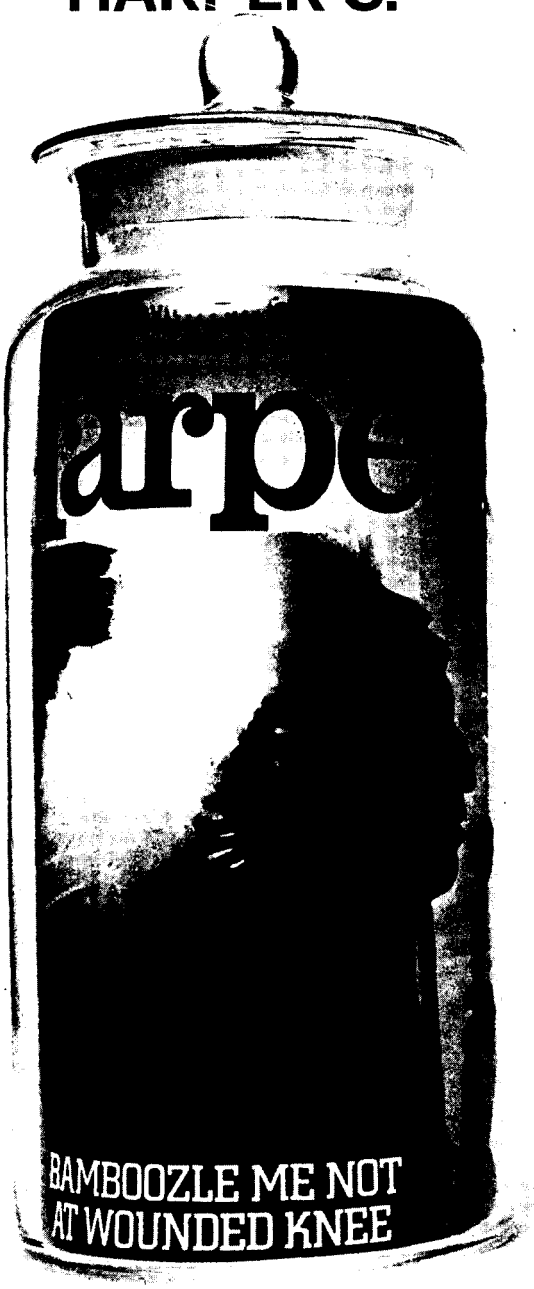

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directed by Dr. Julian Waller. Comparing accidental deaths in rural areas with those in the city, Waller found that the fatality rate was *four times* higher in the country than in the city, even though the rural crashes took place at generally lower speeds and should have left their victims with a greater chance of survival. The distinguishing factor was the quality and speed of emergency care: in the country it took longer to get to the hospital and the care was not as good.

In the minutes after an injury even small differences in rescue time can greatly alter the patient's chances. Dr. Robert Baker, director of the trauma unit at Cook County Hospital, has estimated that for each 30 minutes that pass before the victim gets skilled medical care, the mortality rate triples.

The hair-raising inadequacy of the nation's ambulance service is certainly the greatest single factor in poor emergency care. The Ambulance Association of America itself makes the startling admission that each year about 25,000 people are permanently injured or disabled by untrained ambulance attendants. Of the 220,000 ambulance technicians in the country, only about five per cent had, by 1970, received the 80 hours of training that the government's Emergency Medical Services division recommends as a minimum. The situation has improved since then, but even now only two states require the 80 hours for certification. "Barbers and beauticians get an average of 1,500 hours' training," says Dr. Dawson Mills of the National Highway Traffic Agency. "To be a mortician you need two years of college, two years of apprenticeship, and one year as an embalmer. But in most places, all you need to operate an ambulance is a driver's license." We might be wise not to sneer at our well-educated morticians—they still operate almost half of the ambulances in the country, 19,000 out of a total of 44,000. Hospitals operate only 1,300, and the balance is made up by volunteers (11,000), commercial companies (4,700), and police or fire departments (4,500).

The War Pays Off

On the bright side, emergency care has given us that long-awaited example of something good that happened because of the Vietnam war. "Wars are when the progress is made in emergency care," Mills says. "Most physicians just don't get that much exposure in their normal practice." Vietnam also provided a specific new technology—helicopters as rescue vehicles. In each major war of this century the fatality rate among the injured has been cut roughly in half. Statistically, you would be safer as a soldier getting shot in Vietnam than as a driver skidding into a crash in New Jersey, because as a soldier you could count on quick helicopter evacuation and transport to a specialized emergency center.

In 1970, even before the war was over, three federal departments—Defense, HEW, and Transportation—formed a cooperative, experimental program called MAST (Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic), which placed military helicopters stationed at bases in the U. S. at the disposal of hospitals and highway agencies in neighboring regions. While limited in ambition (there are just five sites and only about 2,000 patients have been transported), the program is remarkable for its cost of zero dollars. The machines and their crews are paid for in the normal military budget; they substitute the emergency runs for routine practice flights.

At least a dozen other areas have established helicopter rescue programs—Denver, Los Angeles, and Detroit, as well as regional programs in Maryland, Illinois, and Arizona, to name a few. But at $130,000 or more apiece, the helicopters come at too high a price for many communities, especially when there are simpler and cheaper ways to improve their emergency systems. "Often the first priority has to be upgrading the ambulance

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attendants themselves," says Dr. Louis Rousellot of HEW's Emergency Services division.

Dr. Rousellot's division is now financing emergency care projects in six states. Occasionally these involve futuristic-sounding technology—for example, radio-telemetry, which allows a hospital-based doctor to monitor the patient as he is carried in the ambulance. In general, however, the techniques and devices involved are nearly all available now, and usually at moderate cost. A national system of emergency-room classification—one of the higher priorities—is more a matter of making intelligent use of existing resources than of greatly increasing the total supply. Even the mechanical innovations, from helicopters to portable defibrillators, are often applications of devices already in use elsewhere.

Something has happened in these few areas that is not happening elsewhere. The scientific revolution has been recognized, accepted, even if its dominance is still only partial. Authorities have started to think about how to save lives and not just how to prevent accidents. The distance these innovators have put between themselves and the old ways of thinking is somewhat too obvious when one looks at the latest official pronouncement on the subject, made by Claude Brinegar, Secretary of Transportation, last October 22:

> I don't think we are letting up on the car, but in terms of quick payoff, we're back hard on the driver. . . . The collapsible steering gear, improved windshields, the seat belts, the shoulder harness, and perhaps ahead of us the airbags—those technological things have pretty well been explored. [The figures connecting alcohol with collisions] seem to tell you that if you want to put a lot of effort into quick results—which the country wants—it should be on the driver, and I think that's where you'll see the emphasis. . . . It's a matter of singling out the group—the young people and the people who are excessive drinkers are clearly the ones who are causing most of the accidents.

To a man like William Haddon—so

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impeccably logical that, it is said, he began wearing his now-totemic bow ties in medical school because other ties flopped down onto his patients—a statement like Brinegar's simply reveals defective logic. You could not blame the vestigial Ptolemaists for scoffing at Copernicus, nor the Spaniards for staring at the horizon, waiting for Columbus to fall off. The leaders of scientific revolutions in those eras had to patiently explain their cases, much as Haddon feels he must attack the superstition and attack it again. If he is the Sisyphus of traffic safety, he is a Sisyphus with faith—someday you will understand, you witchdoctors and deniers of reason. Major premise. Minor premise. Conclusion: you are wrong, you Brinegars and National Safety Council members. You will accept science and abandon mythology. Stop looking at your cut finger and trying to see why it's swollen; take this microscope and you will see the germs.

It is scientific, sound—and yet unsatisfactory. For the other kinds of accidental death, science and loss reduction have become part of common sense. We insulate electric wires, package poison in small, tight bottles, spend money on fire departments even while emphasizing fire prevention. In the factory we still hear comments about "careless workers" whenever a limb goes through the machinery, but the motives are rarely hard to detect and do not deter us from passing safety legislation. We line the airports with crash vehicles and spend more money investigating several hundred aircraft fatalities than learning more about our traffic deaths. What's gone wrong here? What capsule of unreason protects the mythology of the highways from Dr. Haddon's disinfectant?

Haddon has an answer here too—the "original sin" fallacy, which makes us keep blaming the driver despite our best intentions. No one who has looked through the government's new plans for "driver training" programs can scoff at that statement, and especially if we have known someone killed by a drunken driver, we can no more forgive those drivers or dismiss our hatred than a woman who has been raped can forgive her attacker. Still, "original sin" has a tinny ring; something is not whole. When the scientific revolution was on the march before—trampling the encampments of old-guard thought about the environment or occupational safety or minority rights—it was cheered on by a rather fine-featured claque of academics, politicians, intellectuals united for the defeat of ignorance. I have on my desk a bibliography of popular articles designed to correct the outdated ideas about pollution. By now it is so thick I can use it for a chopping board. Why isn't there a thick bibliography of enlightenment for the Brinegars?

There has, in fact, been an abundance of articles on traffic death, but nearly all of them had appeared in journals such as *Good Housekeeping*, and *Motor Trend*. Two years ago *The Saturday Review* printed Arthur Freese's laudable article, "Trauma: One Neglected Epidemic," and from time to time publications like *The New Republic* report that the Transportation Department is controlled by Detroit. With these few exceptions, the intellectual press has given the deaths of 55,000 people a year attention mainly in fiction, where the car is a brutal and plausible mechanism for removing characters. Why?

White Collar Daredevils

Past a certain point there are questions we cannot ask about the automobile. It would be naive not to recognize how deeply the car has become part of our national psyche. It would be equally naive to expect our complicated emotions to yield to simple statements of logic. Many people with an intellectual blind spot about death and the car feel an ambivalence about its threat of violence. Something in them sympathizes with the teenager who roars away from the intersection

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or drives madly down the highway. They share that sense of freedom and command that comes from guiding one's own, private, unassailable little capsule.

They may also share the desire to ride along the brink, to court and control danger. Even while questioning this emotion in skydivers or motorcycle racers, they may feel their own lives somehow empty without it. Most Western European countries have controlled the wells of violence that spill out as murder and rape in the U. S., but they have not reduced the violence of the automobile. Movies like Godard's *Weekend* and Joseph Losey's *Accident* make us aware that the threat of sudden death may fill some need in societies where perhaps too much predictability has been imposed on the other events of life. A psychiatrist, Norman Tabachnick, has estimated that one tenth of our traffic fatalities are suicides. The roots of our irrationality go too deep for us to find.

There are other complications that obstruct the scientists' strict logic. Players at the roulette wheel, we reckon cancer and heart disease as part of the normal odds, bets we must cover. Violent death is the double-0, the number no one counts on and which turns the game in the croupier's favor. We are complicated too by a curious respect for skills. Even those who would not honor the Junior Johnsons of the race track may take pride in controlling their own cars, feeling the same cool skill as a pilot in the cockpit or at the tiller. They are the white collar equivalents of the teenage speeder, those who manage their cars as they manage their lives, deftly and with precision. This is the only explanation I can give for my friend the doctor. By mastering the extra risks he himself creates, he demonstrates his sureness, his agility. Finally, automobiles almost forbid us to view them from a communal rather than an individual perspective. Although most people don't wear seat belts, their presence in the car constitutes a kind of free choice. Those who strap them on know that those who don't are, in some inarticulated sense, responsible for the consequences.

But this can be carried just so far. There are many people who feel none of this romance of danger, who want mainly to protect themselves against getting killed. Their numbers must be larger than the noise they make in the intellectual press. Why don't they face the issue?

The explanation may be a subtler form of blaming the victim than Haddon describes. Many of us suspect, in raising questions about traffic safety, that we know what the answers will be. Alcohol and youth are the causes—can the solutions not involve steps, presumably drastic ones, against alcoholics and the young? The Brinegars have been allowed to set the terms of the argument: we believe it when they blame the victim, but since we don't want the victim to be punished we turn away altogether. To acknowledge the gravity of the situation would be implicitly to support grave efforts for its correction, and this we feel unwilling to do.

Faced directly, traffic safety is actually a hopeful issue. There are ways to reduce the carnage quickly, even before we understand the behavior that lies behind it. That should not prevent us from trying to understand the behavior—especially the acculturation that breeds such anger among young males—it may reduce the dishonesty of pretending the problem doesn't exist until we understand its roots.

He's dead. He died last night while I was asleep and now it was already morning. He has already been dead since way last night and I didn't even know until I woke up. He has been dead all night while I was asleep and now it is morning and I am awake but he is still dead and he will stay right on being dead all afternoon and all night and all tomorrow while I am asleep again and wake up again and go to sleep again. . . . Dead now.

A Death in the Family ■

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Shooting Down Some Myths About Gun Control

by Polly Toynbee

Gun control can mean anything you want it to. To the gun industry it means getting cheap or foreign guns off the market. To the National Rifle Association (NRA) it means getting unreliable, back-firing, "dangerous" guns off the market. To the police it means getting everyone else's guns out of the way. And to hard-line gun control enthusiasts it presumably means rounding up some 200 million guns in a nationwide house-to-house search.

To many on the political left, gun control means a quick and easy answer to the problem of crime. Take away the guns and maybe crime rates will go down, we keep telling ourselves. It won't hurt anybody—except maybe those nasty, gun-toting right-wingers—to ban the guns, and it would be a nice, clean solution to a situation that otherwise raises ugly complications. The only thing wrong is it won't work. Robert Sherrill's *The Saturday Night Special** makes us face the fact that gun control is a security blanket we have to wean ourselves from if we really want to face the law and order issue.

The book is a splendid description of the cant and confusion talked about guns and gun control. As an avowed anti-gun man, Sherrill plays such a good devil's advocate that by

the end of the book he has almost talked himself into thinking that controlling guns isn't possible, practically or politically, and that it probably wouldn't make much difference anyway. He concludes, with de Tocqueville and many others, that America is a violent nation built on violence by a breed of outcasts from the civilized world.

Bob Bates is the gun control specialist in Senator Edward Kennedy's office. "As an issue, I'd put it as

**The Saturday Night Special.* Robert Sherrill. Charterhouse, $7.95.

Polly Toynbee is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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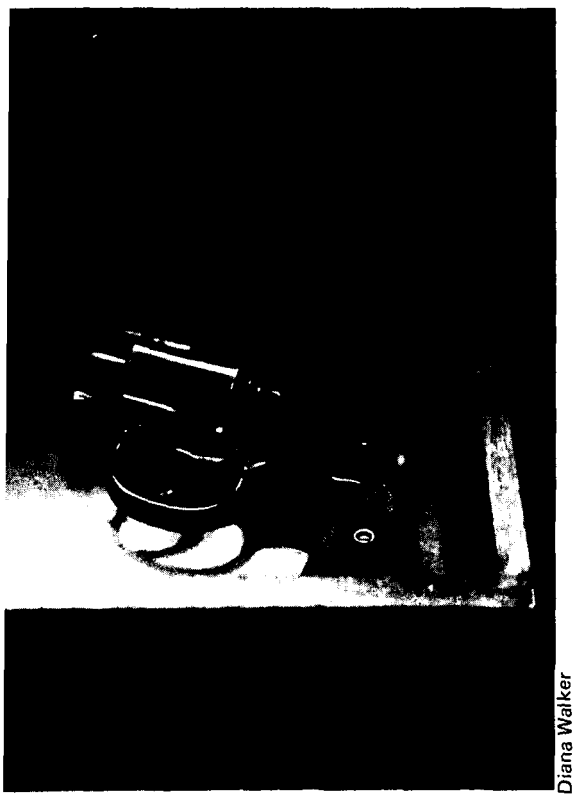

Diana Walker

number one. I mean, at the very top. Effective gun control, in my view, would do more for society than anything else I can think of." Bob Bates has been working to this end for years. "Guns are the *symbol* of all American violence. I don't really think it's meaningful to label ourselves as particularly violent, but with so many guns around it's hard to have another image of ourselves." He hates guns and says, "I feel deeply uneasy when there's a gun around. I had one in the army and as a child I had a cap gun, but my mother hated that. I wouldn't let my children have guns. Do you realize more guns have been made since the mid-sixties than were produced in the whole rest of the century? Possession of guns has no basis in logic. It's a whole mystic machismo thing, I think there is something repulsive about the power a gun confers on someone who has no right to that power. You don't have to be strong, or agile, or clever. If I have a fight with someone with a knife, I can duck, I can see where he's coming at me, and when. Who ever heard of ducking a bullet? And you can't even see the moment when he pulls the trigger. . . .

"America is about wholesomeness, of that I am convinced, not about guns. America is all about family life, earning money, nutritious food. It's the whole good life thing, it isn't the violence. But perhaps I'm wrong." Drawing on his pipe in a ruminative fashion, Bates ended with, "Of course, the rate of death from wounds with knives and other weapons is much lower, that can be shown. And although I can't prove it, I'm sure there would be fewer murders and attempted murders altogether. Look at England, your country. You don't have these problems. But then you're a mature country, and I consider that America is still only adolescent."

Without being in any way sure of how many lives he might save, or how crime and violence patterns might

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change, Bob Bates is convinced that gun control is the answer. When I suggested that might be a liberal cop-out, that real crime control might involve more ruthless and right-wing measures, he simply denied it and wouldn't talk about it at all. He is entirely dedicated to banning guns.

George III's Revenge

George Knight, attorney at law, who retired from the State Department last year, is the kind of character that comes to mind when phrases like "a violent nation built on violence" are mentioned. Knight is a founder of a citizens' action group in Fairfax, Virginia, called "Virginians Organized to Eliminate Suppressive Gun Ordinances." Sitting at his desk in his law office, Knight wears a pair of cowboy boots and conforms in every way to the liberal gun-controller's stereotype of a right-wing gun-lover. "Miss Toynbee, I want you to know," he said before I could sit down, "a gun is a beautiful thing." He collects antique guns, hunts, and takes part in target shooting contests. He has a hand gun for protection in every room of his house, and he also collects knives and swords.

"All the bad things that are happening in this country come from England," he said almost at once on noticing that I was English. "Your bad welfare laws, your gun controls, they're even talking of sending our police out on the streets unarmed, like yours." Without using the word, he perceives society as an anarchy, where every man must look after himself and his own and has no right to expect protection from anyone else. The police are doing a good job, the best that can be expected of them, but Knight no more feels it his right to be entirely protected by them than he expects to be supported on welfare. I asked whether he thought, like Rousseau, that man had made a social contract when he came out of the jungle and began living together in a community with other men, a contract to lay down his arms and invest them in the police and the army, to pay taxes and abide by mutually agreed upon laws. "What kind of a contract is that? We in this country didn't make any contract. We *are* living in a jungle. You go down to 7th Street in Washington, D. C., one dark night if you don't believe me," he said. And he has a point.

The NRA estimates that there are at least 200 million guns in circulation in this country. That's almost one for each citizen. The National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Crime has estimated that half the households in America keep a gun. This means that, criminals and gun nuts apart, a vast number of ordinary, decent people, of every political opinion and social class, carry guns. Running a quick check among liberal friends, friends of friends, and their relatives, I found a surprising number admitting, some of them rather shamefacedly, that they had guns, "Oh, somewhere around the house. I don't know why. I bought it once when there was a scare. I'd be happy to see them banned. I probably wouldn't use it anyhow." A New York advertising man, a California doctor, an elderly lady in Charlottesville, Virginia, an International Monetary Fund official, a journalist in Washington, a lawyer, and more, all of them McGovern supporters. The editor of this magazine said he would have one if it weren't for the statistics that showed that guns are more often used to shoot members of the family than to wipe out intruders.

Clearly, more people, down in their guts, feel some sympathy for George Knight's view of society than like to admit it, or than will openly relate it to their other political views. For example, no one would castigate a liberal for rescuing his child from the D. C. high-school system—which is ridden with crime and drugs, is poverty-stricken and inadequate—yet somehow the liberals' direct contact with these gritty problems, however they deal with them, rarely gets incor-

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porated into their political ideology. But there is a strong case for believing that the social contract has broken down. We agreed to lay down our weapons in exchange for an efficient police force and legal system, but the courts and the police don't seem able to fulfill their side of the bargain. They have our weapons, often making bad use of them, but don't adequately protect us from each other. Perhaps we shall have to face up to the fact that we are living in an uncivilized, jungle state.

It Pays to Be Choosy

Robert Sherrill has a good section on this in his book. Although writing tongue-in-cheek and with the somewhat unpleasant sneer that sometimes creeps into his prose, he is, I suspect, testing what stuff the liberal conscience is made of. Sherrill quotes statistics compiled by the Senate Juvenile Delinquency subcommittee that build a profile of the typical gun killer:

> He had been piling up a criminal record for 10 years prior to his most recent charge of murder; 62 per cent of the gun murderers had previously been arrested for crimes of violence; on an average he had been arrested 2.4 times for serious crimes. As for the victims and the occasion, 81 per cent of the murderers chose their wives or friends or relatives to kill, and in 88 per cent of the cases killed them during a lover's quarrel or a drunken brawl.

And again, someone else giving evidence in Washington stated, "All the statistics show that if you choose with care the people who will share your bedroom with you, or your kitchen, or the adjacent barstool, you will improve your chances from one in 20,000 to one in 60,000" of not being murdered by a gun. Writes Sherrill, "The prototype who emerges from such evidence is white or black trash: a low-class, squabbling, drunken ne'er-do-well."

Now, examining our consciences carefully, don't those facts make us feel a bit better about the crime

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statistics? *We* are not the ones who are in much danger. Sherrill puts it neatly:

> None of [the above facts] comes as a surprise at all: it has been known for years that most murders are the ultimate expression of an already long-established chumminess between low-lifes. The only surprising thing about such revelations is that our opinion shapers still pretend to care about what happens to such people, pretend to argue earnestly that in losing the friends and family of such men we are losing something we cannot muddle along without quite comfortably. . . . And if the riddance is not always exactly good, it is very often tolerable.

This callousness about the 10,000 murders committed each year upset Sherrill's editor, who fired off an angry memo:

> Do you *mean* that? I don't believe that—or let's say I don't *want* to believe that. First, a thousand tragic deaths is a lot of deaths, and if it all came down to just that, I'd say that was a lot of unnecessary killing in no way defensible. Second, you take a remarkably elitist/reactionary-sounding position on the remaining 9,000+ gun deaths, saying in effect (and indeed quite specifically) Good Riddance to this human trash. . . .
>
> Unless you think there is not a jot of chance for improving American society and its inequities, what you're doing here is reinforcing the school that holds that there will always be human dross among us and there is nothing we can do to prevent it. If you can laugh it off, as you sort of do here by saying repeatedly that their self slaughter may be a blessing in disguise, you're just tossing in the towel on America. . . . To say that most of the fatal crimes involve the trash among us is not only unhumane in the extreme; it overlooks the price that all of us pay in money, anxiety, hostility, etc., for allowing this rate of crime to fester.

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I was interested in this outburst, as it reveals that the writer, in spite of his apparent indignation about Sherrill's callousness, is seduced by it himself to some extent. His first point is that 1,000 non-low-life deaths (maybe middle-class deaths) is too many to tolerate. His concern for the 9,000 others comes a poor second. In the last paragraph, he tosses away quite lightly the inhumanity of allowing trash to kill itself, and zeroes in on what really disturbs him, the threat to "all of us."

Sherrill's reply, of course, isn't quite adequate, but then he was only playing devil's advocate in the first place. He answers boldly to his editor, "If the nation wants to let thousands of its citizens live like stray dogs, it has to expect some of them to go mad. Then, when they kill other stray dogs, it is rather silly to sigh and say their teeth were to blame; it is even sillier to pretend that we are sorry a few are killed when we do nothing to salvage the rest. Affluent Americans do not care one whit what happens to their trashier neighbors, and it is hypocritical, at best, to suggest that we are improving their lives by depriving them of their guns."

Now it may be that we are all really familiar with the pattern of crime. We know that it is something that happens in the ghetto, but we are easily scared by such events as the shooting of Senator John Stennis on his very doorstep, and enough other incidents to grab the headlines, even though they don't amount to much in the statistics. We are easily hoodwinked by the alarms put out by politicians, gun salesmen, and appropriations-seekers like the chief of the U. S. Capitol police (whose force protects the Capitol and its grounds). When asking Congress for appropriations this year, the chief said he needed more guns, cars, electronic surveillance, and a computer keyboard linked to the FBI. To support his claim, he said the Capitol grounds harbored hoodlums and underworld criminals from all over the East Coast. In fact, his 1,000 men had arrested only eight people for felonies in the last year. There are plenty of people interested in hyping up the crime-fear fever. That's not to say there isn't any crime, or there isn't any serious problem. Clearly there is, but perhaps we all don't take it as seriously as we think we do. We know that it doesn't happen too much to nice people. We don't know many people who've been killed, not sensible people who keep out of dark corners at night.

Herod's Revenge

In one of the most significant parts of the book, Sherrill carefully analyzes who the murderers and other serious criminals are. Half of them are 18 and younger. One fifth are under 14. Seventy-two per cent of all those arrested for serious crimes were between 13 and 29, and the percentage goes up to 82 per cent when those under 13 are included. From 1965 to 1971 the number of FBI-listed crimes doubled from three million to six million a year. The number of young people aged 17 to 24 also rose by a substantial amount, 47 per cent.

When postulating something Sherrill really finds fairly preposterous, he lapses into his coyest phraseology, but he makes his point: "Confirming the fears of us honkies who are convinced that the darkies will eventually do us in, half of those arrested for murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault were black. The ratio is rather impressive when one considers that blacks make up only one tenth of the total population." He proceeds to inform us that the white population between 1966 and 1975 will have increased by 9.5 per cent, while the black population increase will be 17.7 per cent, and the number of 15- to 24-year-old blacks will grow much faster than the white population of the same age group. A Chicago study shows that the homicide rate of blacks in this age group in 1970 was 30 times higher than that of whites.

Sherrill here drifts off into a fan-

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tasy. Or is it? "The final solution of the youth/gun problem would seem logically to be a super-Herod experiment: the extermination of all young males living in cities of 250,000 and over. Get rid of urban young people and you get rid of virtually all violent urban crime.

"In fairness, society should supply each person of sound mind over the age of 30 with a hand gun and a kind of gift certificate awarding him one free *prima facie* legal assumption that the shooting of anyone between the ages of 15 and 24 was done in self-defense." And adds, "Aw, I'm only kidding—I think." But just for one second, as you read these facts, don't you toy with the idea yourself? How we could weep over the mass graves and castigate the politicians who did it, but wouldn't some small corner of our minds rejoice? Sherrill quotes Thomas Henry Huxley, who said we are neither wise nor just but we make up for all our folly and injustice by "being damnably sentimental."

But, of course, we could never say we were interested in anything like the Herod plan, and so many of us react to the statistics about the violent young males by pretending the numbers don't exist. Instead, we rely on gun control, hoping that it will keep the teenagers from killing us without necessitating the ugly measures Sherrill proposes. If there were a chance that we could ever get rid of all the guns, it might be a good way to cut our losses. It's easier to run away from someone attacking you with a knife or a poker than to escape from a gunman. But when we remind ourselves how many guns are already around and how quickly they would go into hiding when the first serious control proposals were made, aren't we kidding ourselves to think that gun control is the solution to the more basic problem of violence among the young? Sherrill does us a service by pulling away the veil of gun control and making us look at the real issue directly.

Being English, I have always tended towards the view that Sherrill concludes with—America is a crazy, ungovernably gun-toting nation—but I believed that if only Americans would give up their guns they'd be more like us. These days, at the sound of an English voice, NRA officials reach for a little-known book by an English policeman showing that armed crime there is growing rapidly and the number of guns of all kinds in circulation is increasing. Compared to this country, however, England is a nation with few guns and a low crime rate.

Our Lovable Desperadoes

It is interesting to look at Switzerland, where every man on reaching the age of majority is compelled by law to keep a rifle and maintain it in working order. In fact, the government actually issues every man a gun, and yet the crime rate is particularly low. It has to have something to do with national character and self-image. Americans love crime. It's not sur-

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prising that in an ordinary night's viewing on TV, between two and three out of six programs between 7:00 and 11:00 on each of the channels are about crime. Movies currently in town include 16 films about crime and only 13 about love, sex, baseball, and other aspects of people's normal lives. It seems that there isn't *enough* real-life crime for everyone's tastes and what's needed is more: manufactured, synthetic, celluloid crime has to substitute.

This isn't a very new thought, but it may be another point in the whole question of why so little is done about crime and why no one has gotten anywhere near to passing a sensible law on gun control. Sherrill has a chapter called "Our Lovable Desperados" in which he traces the bizarre glamorization of small-time stick-up men like Jesse James, even in their own lifetimes. When James and two companions robbed the Kansas City Fair of less than $1,000 and escaped, leaving a small girl shot in the leg, *The Kansas City Times* described the robbery as "so diabolically daring and so utterly in contempt of fear that we are bound to admire it and revere its perpetrators. . . . It was as though three bandits had come to us from storied Odenwald, with the halo of medieval chivalry upon their garments, and shown us how things were done that poets sing of." And when, after 16 killings, Jesse died, *The Kansas City Journal* mourned, "Goodbye, Jesse." Perhaps there just isn't the public will to end the shootings and the violence.

George Knight put it a little too forcefully for my comfort when he picked up a very heavy ashtray and waved it in the direction of my head. "If I wanted to, I could kill you with this, right now. Or with this," he said, warming to his theme and jabbing a ballpoint pen in my direction. "I could throw acid in your face. I could blind you with a detergent spray. I could choke you with my bare hands. I don't need a gun to kill you, you know."

All the arguments in favor of controlling guns are familiar and convincing. Even if unrestricted guns caused only one extra death a year, it would be worth banning them. There are other deaths that might be prevented by gun control. All the assassins and would-be assassins of Presidents bought their guns across the counter or through the mail legitimately, not on the black market. Collectively, it cost them only $75 to do it. Booth shot Lincoln for $15; it cost Guiteau only $10 to buy a gun to shoot Garfield. Czolgosz killed McKinley with a $4.50 revolver. Zangia took a pot shot at Roosevelt with an $8 rod, and it cost Oswald only $21.45 to murder Kennedy. Since they were all certifiably insane, it might have been something as little as the easy availability of guns that persuaded them to do it. Just a little more difficulty in getting hold of the weapons might have deterred the assassins' unhinged brains. And if there is even a chance that this might be the case we should, with no further hesitation, restrict the sale of guns. But no one, of course, is in a position to claim with any certainty that these men mightn't with almost the same ease have gotten one of the 200 million guns already lying around the place. It would be a question of just trying to reduce the odds in the only way we can.

Enfant Terrible

But perhaps there is more than a tinge of blindness, even hypocrisy, in the shouting, name-calling, and hell-raising that liberals go in for at the sight of a gun. With 200 million of the things around, squeamishness about guns must be pretty rare. On arriving in this country, one of the first texts it seemed necessary to acquire was the report of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. And when one has read through that, with all its careful study of social and historical causes, it would be hard to stand up and honestly aver that

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guns are a major factor in creating crime or violence.

We accept violent death with great equanimity. Every time a great bridge is to be built, a new high-rise complex, or any ambitious engineering feat, we can be pretty sure that the life and limb of several construction workers will be lost. The reason we delicate liberals hate guns is the same reason that gun nuts love them—machismo. Machismo is not a quality much admired these days by the left (not that we don't have our quota of masculinity hang-ups). It isn't really that the statistics show how many fewer deaths there would be if we banned guns—there aren't any. We hate guns, same as we hate everything that is openly and aggressively masculine, coarse, vulgar, and brutish, and the right-wing NRA fans love guns because they are all those things.

Sherrill's book is a clear, concise canter around the whole problem of gun control, mocking those who have half-heartedly attempted reforms and sneering at the police and the NRA almost too much for pleasure. What Sherrill does is to defuse the situation by throwing in any number of conflicting attitudes, but in the end he has escaped making a serious comment on guns and crime. He prefers to play jester than chief adviser. One suspects that is because his rational thinking goes trespassing all over his liberal prejudices, and he isn't about to give up his liberal label, not even that little corner of it. All the same, when I showed the book to John Rector, Deputy Chief Counsel of the Senate subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, a Bayh appointee, I got the feeling that Sherrill had really got under the skin of old gun-controllers. In an office where there is a poster showing a hand gun with the slogan, "Danger—keep out of reach of *adults*," Rector rubbed the side of his nose thoughtfully and said that he, and others who had read the book, were asking themselves seriously whether the man had been got at or was on the take from the NRA.

Sherrill, as *enfant terrible*, goes crashing through soft spots in liberal thinking—using shock tactics, like the Herod massacre suggestion. He brings us up sharply against some nasty realities—well, what *are* we going to do about it? The problem that crime and the whole law and order issue present to the liberal is a painful one. The sight of a small gray gun lying in a friend's bedside drawer sent a nasty chill down my spine. Was this nice and decent person really going to shoot some poor, underprivileged, downtrodden black kid trespassing on his property, whose only real crime, as we all know, is poverty and misery?

Well, I didn't actually think that way, but there's something of that in one's horror of guns—a gentle and woolly love of all humanity. At the same time, we are chilled to the bones at the thought of those delinquents out there, ready to shoot, stone, or burn us for the fun of it, and like everyone else, we want them off the streets. But we know they aren't really to blame, and as Albert Seedman, former Chief of Detectives of the New York Police Department said, "Take away our white-collar jobs, our bank accounts, our expense accounts, our stable families, our nice homes, our air conditioners; add some drugs and booze for solace, and we might kill someone on a Saturday night too." So we don't like to be too hard on them. We don't much care for the suggestions that come from the right—long-term prison sentences for even minor offenses, oppressive police powers, maybe a wide use of capital punishment for repeated offenders. We reach for a nice, clean answer to crime—gun control.

It is humane and simple, and that's why we cling to it with such determination. But we really know that only a handful of accidents and crimes would be prevented, and we know too that a lot of harm is done with knives and baseball bats. This should help us to realize that if we are serious about facing crime and violence we must look beyond gun control. ■

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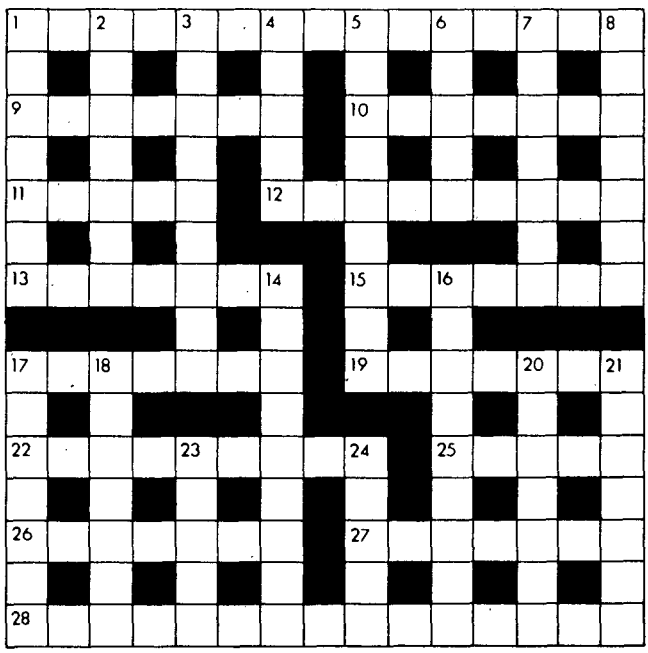
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



DOWN

1. Are you so glad he's lasted on Court? (7)
2. African native active in plug and anvil line. (7)
3. Lion hanging around tiger. (9)
4. Mr. Lee meet Mr. Davis! (5)
5. Lee script may sound dry, but it's all wet. (6 3)
6. Love in sisters may be common. (5)
7. Nader's men air Red's complaints! (7)
8. In songs, he comes aboard. (5, 2)
14. Back up about massive show of support. (9)
16. Note large results from him. (9)
17. Shine and send tingles up my spine. (7)
18. Woo turn caused by shabby clothes. (7)
20. Take cab back between greetings to light grill. (7)
21. Transmitters from Charlie Dressen. (7)
23. Expect to throw it away? No, why? (5)
24. Joke about straw? (5)

ACROSS

1. Short editor finds neuter blondes in bad taste. (6, 9)
9. Element that will ruin Mau Mau society. . . (7)
10. . . . and go right on ruining it. (7)
11. Della's in and out of the soup. (5)
12. With pleasure they say short relative belongs to her. (9)
13. Find better light by Northeast ruins. (7)
15. Near relative who spent so much. (7)
17. Which king came first, i. e., egg or chicken? (6, 1)
19. Put closet in them or vice versa. (7)
22. Set out in craft if you want to join crowd. (2, 7)
25. Life is no bag of cherries back in Africa. (5)
26. Kings and queens make paw riot. (3, 4)
27. Even when definite, clear it with editor. (7)
28. Leave nonentities free to reminisce about war years. (8, 7)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word. Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 48.

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TWO POLICEMEN TALK:

Letting Rizzo Do the Thinking

by Christopher Wren

Dick Gregory, in his *Political Primer*, defined "crime in the streets" as "America's new way of saying 'nigger'." In response to lines like this many liberals nod their heads knowingly. After all, we knew all along that exhortations about crime control were, in reality, code words for racism and repression. So what if Middle America ate it up with a relish currently reserved for a meal of Phase IV sirloin? Liberals could always smugly take comfort in the conviction that civil liberties are never popular and that the Bill of Rights wouldn't win a popular referendum.

Yet many have still to learn what conservatives have known for almost a decade—that crime in the streets has a reality for most Americans that goes beyond simple code words. Increasing numbers of Americans cower in their homes, afraid to walk at night on the streets of their own neighborhoods. Sales of burglar alarms, German shepherds, firearms, and other personal security devices have soared. Cops have become folk heroes, with Joseph Wambaugh's *The New Centurions* and *The Blue Knight* leading the revival. Frank Rizzo is now mayor of Philadelphia, and Thomas Bradley has been elected mayor of Los Angeles. Both are former police officers, as was Minneapolis' mayor, Charles Stenvig.

Meanwhile, because they have refused to seriously confront the realities of criminal violence and have failed to come up with viable law enforcement control measures, liberals have ended up acquiescing in Nixon's law-and-order controls, such as the District of Columbia Court Reform and Criminal Procedure Act of 1970.

Just how ostrich-like this abdication of responsibility on the issue of violent crime enabled the left to become was finally demonstrated in the 1972 Democratic Convention platform. The law enforcement plank consisted of a boatload of platitudes, and included George McGovern's 1971 proposal to uplift policemen by providing them funds to attend college.

As a police officer and volunteer in the McGovern campaign, I had an especially sharp exposure to the difficulties that McGovern supporters had

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with crime and police issues. For one thing, I was constantly asked carefully phrased variants of these basic questions: "How can you be a cop *and* be for McGovern?" and "How can you be a cop and *still* be a liberal?"

No one would deny that police officers as a group have a conservative bias. Yet these questions carry the blunt implication that there is an absolute dichotomy between a "cop" and a "liberal." They imply that the police are an element of society that is totally incompatible with the liberal concept of that society.

While the police and the political left have had their run-ins, the assump tion that police are the enemy means that the left has agreed to think about the issues under all the conservative definitions and premises. Politicians like Reagan, Rizzo, Wallace, and the early Nixon attempted to make physical safety and security synonymous with the specific, often authoritarian, policies proposed by the political right. By asking how you can be a liberal and still be a cop, liberals essentially acknowledge the success of a conservative tactic. Otherwise, why should there be such astonishment at discovering a policeman in the McGovern camp?

There may be a partial explanation for this law-and-order typecasting in the way the people who influence our political decisions have chosen to live. These white, college-educated, and middle-class citizens have participated in the great exodus from the cities to the suburbs. (Those who still live in the cities have generally clustered in pleasant residential sections that often have better police protection than many suburban developments.) Here, their perception of what constitutes crime is different than in the city. In urban areas, the greatest criminal threat comes from murder, assault, robbery, and rape, which together constitute only 15 per cent of all criminal activity, but which account for a great deal of both the individual fear of crime and the political rhetoric of law and order. Even though the threat of these violent crimes has a psychic effect in the suburbs, most of the offenses that actually affect suburban residents are the less violent forms of criminal activity—burglary, larceny, theft of $50 or more, and car theft, which make up 85 per cent of all serious reported crime.

So it is not surprising that suburban residents often speak of crime in terms of burglaries and auto thefts. While they carry the threat of possible violence, burglaries are directed primarily against inanimate objects: a home and its contents. Protection or prevention in these cases is relatively easy, because most second-story men can be discouraged by a murmuring radio or a few lights left burning. City dwellers face the far more real likelihood of assaults, robberies, rapes, or any other incident that presents a perceived physical threat.

Furthermore, the urban resident also faces a higher frequency of burglaries than his suburban counterpart, and must recognize a de facto curfew as well. When the sun goes down, many streets go off limits. People who venture out are often considered either brave or foolish. Whether or not the paranoia that grips the cities is based upon fact or fantasy, the fear of street crime is predicated on a recognition that considerable risks attend a nighttime amble.

But the main point is this: because they are so removed from the origins of city violence, the suburban humanist has no true understanding of how police relate to an urban community's needs. Worse, he may not perceive what is unmistakable in the cities: that even when the police do their job poorly, the presence of some external force is necessary to protect individuals' safety.

People in the suburbs often think they know more than they do about the violence that constantly runs through the city. The suburbanite may expound on the scourge of crime, much as a Washington newspaper columnist who gets his stories over

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lunch at Sans Souci pontificates on "the mood of the country." Remoteness—physical and philosophical—from the center of violent criminal activity certainly accounts for some liberal ignorance about urban crime control.

There is a greater barrier to the establishment of a sound crime program, however, and it developed in the late 1960s out of what might be called the "Ramsey Clark syndrome." This was the attitude that crime is just a symptom of our urban problems, that until we wipe out racial discrim-

Leslie Cashen

ination and economic and cultural inequality, there is little that can be done about crime. This "deprived childhood" theory contends that because black and other minority group offenders don't have the advantages of a good home, financial security, a stable family, and equal educational opportunities, they can't be expected to accept the norms of society and are only reacting in desperation to a hostile and alien cultural environment. Thus, they cannot be held fully responsible for their actions.

This contention invokes an invidious class attitude that should be offensive to liberal sensibilities. It perpetuates, if only implicitly, the myth that the only suitable environment for stable personality development is the white, middle-class suburb. In excusing criminal conduct as a product of inferior upbringing, many people display a condescending, if subtle, elitism which is not lost on urban residents.

When I was in training at the D. C. Police Academy this paradox bothered me. Most of my classmates were black, many from bleak family backgrounds. Most had experienced the effects of heavy-handed law enforcement, and some talked about friends and neighbors who were involved in criminal street activity or were in jail. One day I asked one of them why he had decided to be a cop while many of his "brothers" had chosen drastically different lifestyles. With a look of puzzlement combined with a bit of amusement, he replied, "Yeah, I used to hate cops. They dumped plenty of shit on me. But man, we're all different, just like you white dudes. I could've gone to the street, but that's for losers. They do their thing, I do mine. You know, different strokes for different folks. It's all in what you want to do."

Other fellow recruits felt the same way. While certainly none of their home environments was ideal, each had found it possible to make a choice and felt that others could, too. And by no stretch of the imagination could these black recruits be called Uncle Toms, either. Many were quite militant and spoke far more enthusiastically about Angela Davis and Eldridge Cleaver than more moderate black leaders.

Who's Biased Now?

For many years it has been clear that suspects in criminal proceedings are disproportionately black. Some liberals have often contended that this disproportion is due to a racial bias

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inherent in the system. Bias doubtless exists, but this simple explanation ignores the undeniable fact that crime rates are highest in inner city ghettos and that the victims of violent urban crime are usually black citizens, not affluent whites. Consequently, most black citizens are more anxious for adequate police protection than most whites. They object to particular police methods or individual police officers, but not to the concept of policing.

By using the pernicious effects of ghetto life as the means of explaining away criminal conduct, we imply that the pain and suffering inflicted on victims in the city is somehow insignificant. This is one more way that many liberals remove themselves from the heat of the violence.

The unwillingness of white, middle-class intelligentsia to deal with realistic police reform—not merely unworkable civilian review boards—is quite understandable. As the Americans for Democratic Action admitted in a recent paper, "Crime and Law Enforcement":

> Americans have always been ambivalent about their police. On the one hand, we have worshipped the fictional policeman as a folk hero; but, at the same time, we have made the policeman the object of fear, scorn, and neglect, and have, in fact, attempted to hold him accountable for all society's ills. For 150 years, we permitted an institution vital to our social health to drift into isolation from us; and then, when our social problems became so severe that we could not deal with them, we called in the policeman to save us—and then criticized, scorned, and called him names because he did not respond to our satisfaction.

The left's great difficulty in resolving its feelings about the police also rises from the conviction that law enforcement officers are naturally authoritarian. Liberals fear and detest this authoritarian instinct and therefore resist appeals for more police protection. Yet the basic assumption of police authoritarianism may be quite faulty. In an anthology entitled *The Police*, editor Gerald Leinwand observes:

> There is a common feeling that it is the authoritarian personality that thrives on police work and is lured to the police department. Here, so it is said, the authoritarian personality can find an outlet for his tendency to enjoy both giving and taking orders. Yet, [a study of the Denver police force] found that this was not true at all. "On all personality scales the data show that policemen are absolutely average people and when they do differ from the community

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norm it is in the direction of being better or more nobly disposed than their fellowmen."

So here we are, a nation divided between fear and loathing: the public paralyzed by fear of crime and elected officials loathe to seriously consider any real remedies.

Feeding on Fear

Statistics have obscured and distorted an already isolated middle-class intelligentsia from understanding the visceral realities of crime. J. Edgar Hoover was primarily the author of this misunderstanding. When he wasn't crusading against communist subversion during the 1950s and 1960s, Hoover was making headlines with ominous warnings about the increase in the crime rates, as reported by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), compiled from police departments around the country. Hoover, of course, had a vested interest in soaring crime rates since he used the statistics to justify sizeable increases in FBI funding.

Since the statistical precision of Hoover's arguments was never overwhelming, liberals bitterly attacked the UCRs and Hoover's use of them. Liberals became so beguiled with their own idea that crime wasn't really increasing that they lost sight of the really important fact—*fear* of crime was increasing.

Effective crime control means recognizing the psychological dimension of crime and working against it from that angle. The woman who refuses to go out at night because she is afraid that she'll be raped has already been victimized. Her freedom of movement has been stolen.

There is no way to eliminate crime quickly and humanely in a society as contradictory as ours, and to effectively confront crime control we must start trying to reduce it by degrees to an acceptable level. Certainly, this can be measured in psychological terms—for the impact of crime is frequently as much psychological as it is physical.

Ultimately, citizens, not statistics, determine whether a police department is doing its job. Police must begin by greatly reducing the importance of the much-abused accounting systems and other statistics-gathering methods and abandoning the illusions of authority and accuracy they breed. In their place the police should substitute methods for determining the "confidence level" or "fear level" of the residents in a neighborhood.

This doesn't mean that urban police departments should hire the Rand Corporation to develop elaborate sociological measures of neighborhood cohesion. And it doesn't mean that police captains should be required to have masters' degrees in statistical analysis. A police department can develop its own commonsense measures of citizens' confidence in the safety of their neighborhoods.

A nighttime drive along city streets illustrates what can be measured. In some sections of town stores stay open throughout the evening, people congregate on the streets, adequate lighting minimizes the number of forebodingly dark doorways and alleys, and the police are relatively inconspicuous. Other areas, however, despite constant police patrolling, appear almost deserted. Stores close in the late afternoon and residents barricade themselves indoors. Anybody on the street after dark is viewed by both police and local inhabitants as ipso facto suspicious and dangerous.

The key factor is the intangible community confidence that develops independently of police activity. Confidence, like fear, will feed on itself. When some people begin to use the streets regularly late at night, others will follow. Eventually, a level of security will develop which encourages people to feel safe on the street, even long after the sun has set. Essentially, people on the street lure other people out. Criminal activity, which thrives on fear in dark, lonely spaces, will fade, moving into areas where fear levels are higher and confidence much lower.

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One course of action that would create greater confidence in neighborhood security is relatively simple and yet can have a profound effect: better street lighting. Better lighting can help reverse the trend of violent urban crime by reducing the darkness which initiates the cycle of crime and fear.

Uniformed patrolmen provide another psychological boost, even if they have no real power. People find their presence alone is reassuring. Washington, D. C. uses cadets—high school graduates not old enough to become regular officers—to handle traffic and write parking tickets, and to perform some administrative functions as well. Cadets do have an impact even though they aren't armed. They serve as police eyes and ears as much as any patrolman, and their calls to the dispatcher yield an immediate response. For the average Washington pedestrian, cadets are as much of a police presence as a regular officer. They are by no means the answer to all police staffing problems in every city, but they indicate the great potential of other forms of police auxiliaries. Rather than training more regular patrolmen, a department might hire assistants for certain specific purposes. Uniformed but unarmed "watchmen" equipped with portable radios might walk beats in low-crime districts, freeing regular officers to concentrate on the more dangerous areas where they are really needed.

The hiring of more civilian personnel could relieve officers of clerical and administrative functions which don't require police training, releasing policemen for street duty and, once again, creating the impression of having more police without hiring and training more officers.

Finally, a change in duty shift policy could put more men on the street during peak crime hours. As Don Graham notes in his review of Jonathan Rubinstein's *City Police*, (page 39), "Most big-city departments keep a third of their patrolmen on the street in the early morning hours when crime and traffic are at their lowest." In the same book, Rubinstein mentions that "most [police officers] feel that 'the night is made for loving and sleeping,' " an attitude which leads to high absenteeism on the midnight shift.

To remedy this situation, the midnight tour could be made a permanent volunteer assignment, with higher pay as an incentive. While simultaneously reducing the number of patrolmen working midnights, the remaining officers would rotate between the day and night shifts, making the changeover following their days off so no one would have to work 16 straight hours. A rotation like this would, in effect, put more police on the streets at the times they are needed, with minimal additional cost and no new officers.

Other changes would also make departments more effective: assigning officers to motor scooters allows for more public contact than a patrol car, greater mobility, range, and speed than a footman, and, ultimately, the impression that police are always available. This appearance tends to reassure the public, makes criminals less daring in their operation, and somewhat deters crime.

The list of possible changes could go on endlessly, but that's not the point. What is important is realizing that there are solutions that liberal politicians and policymakers can use without damaging their own images or infringing upon civil liberties.

Crime is a serious issue for most Americans. With the bulk of our population living in urban areas, crime has political implications, and savvy politicians are apt to cater to law-and-order sentiments. When they recognize simple terror and try to reduce it step by step, enlightened governments will also reduce hard-line demagoguery. Whether they succeed, or whether the hard-liners succeed, depends entirely on which school appeals to the public with the most effective antidote to a debilitating fear. ■

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TWO POLICEMEN TALK:

Thinking for Ourselves: The Questions We Can Start With

by Don Graham

We know so little about the police in our big cities that any factual help we can get is welcome. Although Jonathan Rubinstein's *City Police** has serious defects, it is by far the best nonfiction book ever written on the subject. There are, of course, limits to how far Rubinstein's observations of the Philadelphia police—or, for that matter, my own experience as a District of Columbia policeman—can be expanded into generalizations. But the book provides so much provocative information that it is an extraordinarily useful starting point for understanding police work in other cities. If it does not give us all the answers, it at least defines the questions we should be asking.

I can't summarize *City Police*, because it is a description of police work that the author observed in over two years in Philadelphia. Rubinstein was a Harvard history Ph.D. who decided to become a police reporter for the Philadelphia *Bulletin*. After a few months on the paper, he worked up the audacity to ask Frank Rizzo's department to let him see it from the inside.

And wonder of wonders, the police not only agreed, they let Rubinstein do exactly what he wanted for the next year. He went through the police academy, he rode with officers in

Donald Graham is a former District of Columbia policeman.

**City Police*. Jonathan Rubinstein. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $10.

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several parts of the city. He carried a gun, worked a regular shift, walked beats, and was a policeman in everything but badge, pay, and power of arrest.

During these months Rubinstein came to realize, as any policeman does, that the least understood thing about police work is the nature of the job itself. "Policemen. . . see their work as a series of moments of action which cannot be understood unless directly experienced," he writes. What does a Philadelphia policeman do in his eight hours of work, and why? What priorities does the department give to the various jobs it assigns him? If he does a good job, how will he be rewarded? If his superiors don't like his work, what can they do? There are a few things he has to say about Philadelphia's police that strike me as good observations.

†"A police officer is not a soldier. But people refuse to see him in any other way." Writers keep referring to the police as a quasi-military organization, yet the differences between the soldier and the policeman are nearly total. Basic training instills in the private an instinctive obedience to orders and an unwillingness to act on his own initiative. The police academy teaches its rookies to use their own judgment. Orders will never come in time.

†On the midnight to eight a.m. shift, "it is not easy even for the conscientious to remain alert throughout the night. . . . Patrolmen who refuse to sleep often speak contemptuously of their colleagues who do, but every policeman understands the desire to do it." That's right—and the desire must be stronger in Philadelphia, where policemen must change their working hours every week, than it was in Washington, where we changed every other week. Amazingly, most big city departments keep a third of their patrolmen on the street in the early morning hours when crime and traffic are at their lowest.

†Philadelphia's police must make a written report on every call. If the people of Philadelphia knew what their policemen do with their time, would they tolerate the thousands of man-hours that must be spent annually in writing and processing the reports on false calls?

†"There is no special judo training or suggestion that a policeman should develop sophisticated combat skills." Nor is there in Washington. Yet the idea that the police have judo or karate training persists almost everywhere and probably saves policemen quite a few fights.

†" 'I've worked this sector so long that my wife wakes me up by calling my car number. It started as a joke, you know, but it worked, and she does it all the time now.' " Some physiologist or psychologist should study how it is possible for a policeman to drive down a street oblivious to what the radio is saying and then hear everything that is said when his scout car gets a call. Some policemen even claim to be able to sleep in the car on the midnight to eight a.m. tour and wake up when their scout car number is called on the radio.

†"The worth of a man to his platoon does not depend on his success in preventing crimes, arresting suspected felons, or even giving service without complaint or injury. A man may be offered a transfer to a choice unit if he makes a spectacular arrest, but catching bank robbers is not the way to develop a sergeant's friendship. That requires something very different."

In Philadelphia, it's called "activity," and the report it goes on is the "activity report." In Washington, the report is called the "scandal sheet." "Activity" means the whole of an officer's work, but how do you quantify what a policeman does? If you say he made one felony arrest in the last month, you do not know whether he marked up an armed robber after weeks of patient investigation or made a bad aggravated assault arrest that was thrown out of court the next morning. Nevertheless, most departments seem to keep some such record.

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Leslie Cashen

What a department asks for on the activity report in large part determines what it gets, and what the Philadelphia police want is "vice activity."

That means gambling, liquor, and narcotics arrests, mostly the first two, because narcotics arrests are almost impossible for a uniformed policeman to make. "As one lieutenant said, 'You can be a good guy, be a great bull-shitter, keep your car clean, make a lot of arrests, but without vice you'll never get an outstanding [evaluation rating] from me.' "

There is no quota for vice arrests, but the Philadelphia platoon is ex-

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pected to increase the number of its arrests each year. Numbers, not quality, are what's important. No one knows or cares what happens to these cases in court.

As Rubinstein correctly points out, these arrests are not made because they are easy, and not because citizens want them made. They are made because the sergeant wants them and, presumably, because the commissioners want an increasing number of vice arrests to show that their department is clean from corruption and to reduce their men's incentive to take graft.

In Washington no one counts how many vice arrests patrolmen make, and as a consequence, they make almost none. I don't remember ever arresting anyone for liquor or gambling violations; I asked a patrolman friend who had just received the highest possible rating for promotion to sergeant how many gambling or liquor cases he had made in three and a half years as a patrolman. He couldn't remember any.

Perhaps more than anything else they learn from *City Police*, city officials and citizen activists should learn to ask their police chiefs just how the city evaluates its patrolmen. In Washington, for example, the D. C. police faithfully record each month how many burned-out streetlights each officer has found and how many "defects in public space"—mostly potholes—he has recorded in a book kept in the station. This practice goes back to the days when nearly all policemen walked a beat and the sergeant's main concern was seeing that his men were walking where they were supposed to be.

Because of hundreds of such good observations of petty things and important ones, the reader can finish *City Police* feeling that he knows what life is like for the cop on the street.

But is his knowledge applicable only to the streets of Philadelphia, or do his hometown police behave the same way? The question is particularly important because Rubinstein found the Philadelphia police employing a lot of pretty seamy tactics. They must make vice arrests, he writes. Such cases are hard to make legally, so the policeman perjures himself. He has virtually no choice, Rubinstein says:

> The honest patrolmen who is determined to advance in his platoon cannot long resist involvement in these practices. They offer him the only substantial chance to make the arrests that bring him the credit he seeks . . . . If he has nothing to trade, if he is a "straight cop" he will not make deals or extort information, the only alternative he has is to beat information from people.

And, of course, there is a lot of bribery, since gambling and liquor operators in Philadelphia see the patrolman on the beat as a threat to them and try to buy him off.

This may have been true of Philadelphia, but it does not resemble police work as it was practiced in one precinct in Washington three years ago. The department Rubinstein describes was run by older men. As rookies came to a precinct, they were broken in by the veterans, taught to police the old way. It was also a department in which a man's beat or sector was treated as his private property. One car would not cross into another's territory—certainly would take no police action there—unless the sector car was on a call.

Washington's police department in 1969-70 was dominated by rookies. The size of the force had been almost doubled as successive Presidents decided to "do something" about crime in the capital. As the size of detective units like the homicide and robbery squads increased, veteran policemen fled to them. So a rookie coming from the academy did not find himself the partner of a 20-year man. He rode, or walked, with someone almost as new as himself.

There was only one footman in the platoon who walked a regular beat. Everyone else changed beats almost every day. A corner bookmaker would have had to be crazy to offer a patrolman a bribe under these circumstances; the patrolman wasn't going to

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be on the corner the next day anyway. The danger to the bookmaker came from the vice squad detectives.

Another factor impeding corruption, I thought at the time, was the large number of black policemen and the tension between them and their white counterparts. At a time when black patrolmen were calling press conferences to denounce their sergeants and lieutenants for discriminating in scout car assignments, no one doubted that some black officers would happily blow the whistle on whites who were openly corrupt.

Finally, when I first arrived at the precinct, no "scandal sheet" report of arrests and tickets was kept. Later, one was published, but no emphasis was placed on an officer's performance. Now, all of these factors—the prevalence of rookies, racial tension, lack of pressure from higher-ups, and above all the steady rotation of beats—help lower the level of corruption. But they also make the policemen less efficient in making arrests and preventing crime. A policeman who walks a beat every day will know the people on it better than a man who is there only one day out of five. He will know the local teenagers and the local burglars and hold-up men, too. But the people on his beat will know him as well, and those who care to test him, to see if a few dollars will let him permit some illegal activity, will probably do so.

City Police does not answer the question of whether a city ought to prefer being patrolled by more "corruptible" policemen, or more "inefficient" ones. There may not be any general answer that will apply to all cities at all times, although Rubinstein says in his preface, "I draw inferences and offer judgments about work and behavior which extend far beyond the city limits of Philadelphia." (The book jacket less modestly proclaims, "Everything he describes applies to any big city in America." But by indicating some of the choices all departments must make, Rubinstein gives the reader a far sharper idea of where to begin inquiry about his own city's police.

There are some important things wrong with Rubinstein's book. He does not put much emphasis on race in describing relations among policemen, or between policemen and citizens. He does not put much emphasis on how and how much policemen are paid, although next to the activity report, incentive pay offers the department its most direct means of control over policemen. He frequently fails to specify whether he himself is involved in an incident he describes, even though the behavior of both policemen and citizens must have been affected by the presence of a mysterious plain-clothes-wearing stranger. And he is sometimes too impatient in leaping to conclusions not justified by his evidence.

But for all its defects there is no discounting the importance of this book. It puts every American big-city resident in a position to ask the right questions, and that is a position we have never been in before. ■

to: Santa Claus, Christmas shoppers, and all readers

from: The Washington Monthly

subject: see page 19 for information on the NEW

memo book

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Tidbits and Outrages

The Big Dipper

Readers of these pages will be aware of our continuing interest in the government's "double-dippers"—those who receive a military pension while holding another government job. Sid Taylor of the National Taxpayers Union recently wrote Barry Goldwater suggesting that he set an example for fellow double dippers in Congress by giving up the $6,650 per year he receives as a retired Air Force Major General. Here's the Senator's answer:

What you suggest in your letter is great, but in my case it is not so easily done. You see, I came up for retirement from the Air Force Reserve in 1967 which was the year before I was reelected to the Senate, and it was during a time when I was unemployed. I accepted my retirement even though I have often said that had I been in the Congress when this was suggested I would have voted against it, because I don't believe Reserve officers, unless they serve out a full span with the regulars, are entitled to retirement.

When I first became a Reserve officer it took two days to earn one bogie, but now it is day for day and I don't think that's correct. If I wrote to the Reserve Command and told them I did not want my check any more, this would never get through the computer. What would happen is that my check would come out regularly each month and then, even if I might refuse them, they would be piling up, and some day either I would have to take the accumulation and then tremendous taxes would have to be paid.

To be honest with you, I at one time felt that it was perfectly all right for a reservist to serve in the Congress, and I was ready for immediate call. The only understanding I had was that my governor had 10 days in which to appoint a successor. However, since looking into it, I realize that many of the colonels and flag rank officers in the Congress and the Pentagon and around Washington if called to active duty would actually be doing a lesser job for their country than they are doing now. Also, at that time the question of double dipping or double service was very muddled up and it was felt then, as it had been felt throughout our history, that a reservist could serve in the Congress. In fact, the law is pretty clear that he can accept a retirement check and still be legal, even though there is a question of morality about it.

You are mistaken when you consider me a millionaire; I'm not. I'm not exactly poor, but I'm a long way from hitting that big figure, and I don't see any chance of it ever happening in my present employment. I'm glad you wrote me as you did. I suggest you write others in a similar situation. It might do some good if all of us, for example, insisted that no more checks be sent, but I don't think, really, that it's going to amount to anything.

Everything makes sense once you get a clear explanation.

Dam Shame

In a hollow near the town of Wharton in Boone County, West Virginia, there is a dam built of dirt and debris used to hold back sludge from the mines. It is the same type of dam as the one that broke and destroyed Buffalo Creek in early 1972, killing 150 people in one of the worst tragedies in coal mine history. Since shortly after the disaster, the Department of Interior has been trying to get Eastern Associated Fuel Corporation to stop using the dam. The company refuses, contending that it is safe. The government inspectors say the dam is moving down the hollow at the rate of 70 feet a year. It is 500 feet high, and has more water behind it than the one at Buffalo Creek.

A Success Story

The government *is* fighting inflation. According to John Cramer of the Washington *Star-News*, the Secretary of the Army's Mess offered the generals on October 1: vichysoisse and baked half young chicken bordelaise for just $1.00. If the senior officers preferred, they could have gone on the same day to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's dining room and had minestrone, baked lasagna, broccoli polonaise, Caesar salad, garlic bread, and beverage for $1.40. For those who need an alcoholic beverage, the Army Material Command in Alexandria offers cocktail and lunch at the Commanding General's Mess for $1.80. His secretary can get the same thing downstairs for $3.67.

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CHARLES A. BAKER, Jr. is congratulated by Colonel Allan J. English, Jr., commander, U.S. Army First Recruiting District, during a recent award ceremony. Mr. Baker, of Taylor Park Road, Sykesville, received a certificate of Recognition for not taking sick leave for a one year period.

Tactful Restraint at the CIA

The Washington Post has had so much good Watergate material that occasional gems get buried deep in the back pages like these illuminating paragraphs on the new head of the CIA, William Colby. They describe Colby's testimony before a House committee investigating the CIA and Watergate.

Colby also acknowledged that he sought unsuccessfully to conceal from former Watergate prosecutor Earl Silbert at an interview on Nov. 27, 1972, that it was White House domestic affairs adviser John C. Ehrlichman who requested CIA assistance for Howard Hunt Jr. in July, 1971, in connection with the break-in of the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

In a "memorandum for the record" on the interview with Silbert, Colby said he "danced around the room several times for 10 minutes to try to avoid becoming specific on this, finally naming the White House, and was then pinned by Silbert with a demand for the name, at which point the name of the individual was given."

The name was Ehrlichman. Colby recited his efforts to withhold Ehrlichman's name in a White House meeting on Dec. 15, 1972, with Ehrlichman and then White House counsel John W. Dean III in the presence of Helms.

This was some six months after Helms and Walters realized, according to their subsequent testimony, that Ehrlichman and Dean were trying to implicate the CIA in the Watergate case.

Colby said he had hoped to withhold Ehrlichman's name from federal prosecutor Silbert because "there was a reluctance to drop somewhat inflammatory names into the kind of atmosphere that was around us at that time."

Another Success Story

The Congress that has lost one veto fight after another to President Nixon finally defeated him in late September. The issue of crucial national importance that brought forth their first successful effort to stand up to the President was a dispute over the effective date of a pay raise for federal employees. The President wanted to delay it as an anti-inflationary measure, but the vigorous lobbying of the government employee unions won out. The result, among other things, is that we now have 72,669 civilian government employees making over $24,000 a year. By 1977, their salaries will be at least $36,000. A year ago we ran an article giving another illustration of these unions' power. It was called "Stealing from the Blind" and showed how the government employee associations had been destroying one of the few government programs that worked—vending stands operated by the blind in federal buildings. The General Accounting Office has just completed another investigation showing that the trend continues. Sixty per cent of the blind vendors reported a net income of less than $3,000 because of the vending machines operated by employee associations. At six military installations in the Washington area the blind had a net income of $38,000; the employee associations, a net income of $2,500,000.

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more tidbits and outrages

Attorneys Still at Law

Unfortunately, the Ervin Committee seems to have lost interest in the legal profession's role in Watergate. But we continue to be curious, not only about the more prominent players such as Ehrlichman and Mitchell, but about the Herb Kalmbachs as well. Take William O. Bittman, who seemed to find nothing untoward about picking up his fees in a phone booth. This man, who may well have been the grand paymaster of the conspiracy, continues to practice law as a partner in one of Washington's more prestigious firms, Hogan and Hartson. Or Gerald Alch, who still practices law in Boston despite evidence that he tried to make James McCord plead guilty as a favor to the Nixon Administration. Or Judge Matthew Byrne, who twice discussed the FBI directorship with Ehrlichman while presiding over the Ellsberg trial. Or Judge Charles Richey, who managed to prevent any damaging evidence in the Democratic National Committee's Watergate civil suit from coming out before the election.

A Tale of a Tub

Public indignation about government spending on presidential retreats has properly focused on San Clemente and Key Biscayne, where public funds are being spent on private property. Camp David is less scandalous because the public money is at least being spent on public property. We were intrigued nonetheless by this report from Maxine Cheshire of *The Washington Post*:

Almost $2.4 million has been spent on Camp David since President Nixon took office five years ago—more than the facility cost under all three of his most recent predecessors combined. Although no breakdown on the 1969-73 expenditures has yet been made available by the Defense Department, $150,000 went for a swimming pool built beside the presidential lodge in the summer of 1969.

Previous Presidents used an existing pool, located a quarter-mile away and reached by golf cart.... The new swimming pool, a figure-eight design with interlocking circles which measure 40 feet and 25 feet in diameter, was kept a secret until earlier this year.

One reason the pool cost so much was its location, according to the superintendent on the job at the time, John Hughes. The President wanted it right outside his door. But the presidential lodge is located on a hillside, atop an underground bomb shelter. The Navy could permit no blasting or earth-moving.

So the pool was set above ground, like a giant bathtub built of wood and steel and concrete. Then a conrete slab was suspended around it like a deck. Because the terrain slopes away there, the camouflaged terrace makes the pool appear to be in the ground and a few steps down from the house....

Good Noise and Bad Noise

Those who live near airports seemed to have new reason to delay suicide. On October 25 the Federal Aviation Administration announced that "stringent noise certification standards" would apply to certain airplanes that were previously unregulated. "The new rule reflects FAA's determination to quiet the skies as rapidly as advancing technology permits," said FAA Administrator Alexander Butterfield.

Those who read the fine print in *The Federal Register*, as Neil McBride of the Aviation Consumer Action Project did, may not be so encouraged. In explaining why it had not bothered to file an environmental impact statement on the rule, the FAA said it "believes that the amount of noise reductions involved and the limited number of affected aircraft require the conclusion that this amendment will not cause a 'significant' reduction in the community impact of overall fleet noise."

Not My Department

The National Observer reports that an underground fire has been burning on federal land in Alaska since 1969. It seems that the Bureau of Land Management won't put it out because it only has jurisdiction to fight surface fires. The Bureau of Mines can fight underground fires, but only if they're buring coal. Unfortunately, the Alaska fire is burning shale.

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What Makes Congress Run?

by Norman Ornstein

Senator William Proxmire is not the only one jogging on Capitol Hill these days. On sunny afternoons tourists are apt to see half the House of Representatives chugging across Independence Avenue toward the House floor for a roll-call vote. Meanwhile, their colleagues are plugging along labyrinthine underground passages toward the subway that links the Rayburn House Office Building with the Capitol. All this haste is decidedly uncongressional and most closely resembles a class change on a busy college campus.

It wasn't always this way. Until 1973 voting in the House of Representatives was one of the more leisurely activities in the entire federal government, an institution never known for its frenetic pace. Generally, it took the House clerks 35 minutes to read through the roster of 435 members and then record the absentees. And if this wasn't long enough for procrastinating members, understanding clerks could always stretch the process out another five minutes to accommodate latecomers.

Norman J. Ornstein teaches political science at Catholic University.

These good old days are now fondly remembered. As one veteran Democrat recalls, "I used to have the old system down pat. They would ring the bells, call the roll once, then the bells rang again, and they called the names of the non-responding members. I had about 12 minutes after that point, and if I left my office five minutes after the second bells, I made it to the floor easily." Now congressmen must bolt their bean soup in the House dining room and head for the Capitol as soon as the bells ring for a vote.

The big change in the pace of congressional life occurred last February, when an electronic voting system was installed in the House of Representatives. No longer do the clerks drone through an alphabetical list of 435 names. Instead, congressmen now have just 15 minutes to register their votes on computer consoles triggered by the insertion of individualized plastic cards. Instantly, their vote is flashed on a tote board which is mounted over the Speaker's head and which resembles nothing so much as the latest advance in basketball scoreboards.

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Reforming the way Congress votes is far from a new idea. In fact, tradition has it that Thomas Edison's first patent was for a device to automatically record congressional roll-call votes. Although 19th-century legislators refused to consider Edison's gadget, several state legislatures have adopted computerized voting within the past decade. The issue was raised repeatedly in the House during the 1960s but was thwarted by a mixture of congressional inertia and the reluctance of many members to alter their hallowed traditions.

That's why it was rather surprising when electronic voting was finally adopted in July, 1970, as an amendment to the Congressional Reorganization Act. Unlike other reforms, such as the modification of the seniority system and the adoption of the recorded teller vote, computerized voting was not debated along ideological lines. In fact, the key advocate of reform was Wayne Hays, then ranking Democrat on the House Administration Committee and now its chairman. Hays, one of the most conservative of northern Democrats, has a sadistic disposition which has won him a reputation as the most genuinely unpleasant man in Congress. He has become one of the powers of the House, not only from other members' terror that his attention will light on them, but also through his control of routine housekeeping tasks and his supervision of all House employees. The new voting system provides him with more than 40 additional employees to supervise and puts him in control of the House's only computer.

Joining Hays in support of computerization were such technology-oriented Republicans as Robert McClory, who had long been advocating that Congress be run more like a business, with efficient, modern equipment. In addition, the project had the support of Democrat B. F. Sisk, chairman of the Rules subcommittee that had jurisdiction over the project. Most House liberals supported electronic voting, but they did not consider it a priority issue and spent little time gathering support for it. The major objection Hays and his cohorts faced was the predictable complaint about the cost to the taxpayers.

Purple Hearts

All of this would be of interest solely to Capitol Hill tour guides if electronic voting did not have some significant—and rather unexpected—side effects. For example, the instantaneous flashing of votes on the tote board has greatly increased the congressional leaders' ability to pinpoint party defectors on close and important votes. Take the vote earlier this year in which the House rejected by one vote, 197 to 196, an effort to increase minority staffing for House committees. Electronic voting allowed Carl Albert and Tip O'Neill to quickly locate a couple of errant Democrats and strong-arm them into changing their votes before the 15-minute roll-call was up.

But the real impact of computerized voting stems from the rigid time limit. Fifteen minutes is just not very much time to get from a congressional office to the House floor and cast your vote, especially, as is the case with many members, if you have no idea

Answer to the November puzzle:

1 P	R	2 O	S	3 E	C	4 U	T	5 E	■	6 A	■	7 F	■	8 G
O	■	I	■	L	■	P	■	R	O	B	B	E	R	Y
10 S	O	L	I	C	I	T	O	R	■	E	■	L	■	M
S	■	E	■	I	■	I	■	A	■	11 T	H	O	R	N
12 E	13 R	14 R	E	D	■	15 G	A	N	G	S	■	N	■	A
■	E	■	V	■	■	H	■	D	■	■	16 P	■	■	S
17 S	E	P	A	R	A	T	18 E	S	■	19 R	O	O	20 S	T
■	L	■	D	■	■	■	G	■	■	■	L	■	P	■
21 A	S	H	E	N	■	22 P	O	23 L	I	T	I	C	A	L
M	■	■	S	■	■	U	■	A	■	■	S	■	S	■
E	■	24 I	■	25 A	G	N	E	W	■	26 S	H	27 A	M	28 E
29 R	I	S	E	R	■	T	■	Y	■	C	■	S	■	M
I	■	S	■	I	■	30 E	X	E	C	U	T	I	V	E
31 C	R	U	I	S	E	R	■	R	■	B	■	A	■	N
A	■	E	■	E	■	32 S	U	S	T	A	I	N	E	D

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what's being voted on. Originally, proponents of electronic voting wanted the time limit to be 12 minutes, but when confronted with a chorus of objections they settled for a quarter of an hour. Despite the inconvenience, it would be politically difficult for the House to relax the time limit any further. Allowing 20 or 25 minutes for a roll-call would awaken members' fears of the inevitable AP feature story beginning, "Congress has spent $1.1 million of the taxpayers' money for a new voting system that saves six minutes on each vote." Also, most liberals favor rapid voting, because it allows them to cram in more votes on floor amendments during the House's tightly scheduled legislative debates. And as if all this were not enough to keep Congress from returning to its leisurely old ways, the lurking shadow of Wayne Hays may make members prefer shortness of breath to the whiplash of his tongue.

So life on Capitol Hill has become significantly less pleasant for many senior congressmen. The frequent sprints across Independence Avenue increase the risk of being felled by a coronary in the line of duty. Voting has become particularly irksome for the less issue-oriented legislators who have to commute from the House gym to make roll-call votes. A few members like Harold Donohue, the last of John McCormack's Massachusetts cronies still in Congress, solve the entire problem by merely spending their days dozing on the House floor. But for veteran members who have not reached such a happy accommodation with technology, the allure of the $42,500 salary and the prestige of being in Congress have paled significantly.

Meanwhile, increasing citizen concern with good government has effectively removed for most members the obvious solution—simply ignoring roll-call votes. There are few reliable ways for most voters to measure the performance of their congressmen. It is difficult to analyze their voting records, especially when they indulge in such legislative tricks as voting one way on an amendment and the opposite way on final passage of the bill. But even the most apathetic voter senses something awry if his representative has missed 40 per cent of the roll-calls. Almost nothing in the checkered political career of Adam Clayton Powell inspired more comment than his habit of spending his time on the beach in Bimini instead of on the House floor. In the same way, Margaret Chase Smith was far better known for never missing a Senate roll-call than for any position she ever took on a specific issue.

While congressional reform has become one of Washington's favorite topics during the last five years, reformers have been almost totally oblivious to such mundane matters as voting attendance. Yet in the long run, such non-ideological reforms as increased pensions and electronic voting may have an enormous political impact. The pressure of the new voting system may give older members one more reason not to prolong their congressional careers into their 70s and 80s. Retirement and death have become almost the only way that congressional seats change hands—95 per cent of the incumbents who ran for reelection in 1972 won. Passage of measures like electronic voting may owe more to serendipity than design, but reforms like these may play a significant role in making the House a more responsive institution.

Perhaps reformers should shift their focus to other nuts-and-bolts issues such as closing the congressional gyms or removing the elevators from congressional office buildings and assigning space on the basis of seniority—with freshmen on the ground floor. These are not replacements for more direct ways to keep Congress from being a life-tenure institution—reform of the franking privilege, for example, or public financing of campaigns—but they may be useful weapons against those who should be spending their sunset years elsewhere.■

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Memo of the Month

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12224

JOHN R. CLARK
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

March 30, 1973

TO: All Professional Staff

SUBJECT: Simplification of the $ .08294 Rate for Mileage Reimbursement

On January 18, 1973 I issued a memorandum concerning reimbursement for round trips of less than 35 miles. In the memorandum, I indicated that we would allow reimbursement for round trips of 35 miles or less at the rate of $ .08294 with no additional reimbursement for tolls or parking. It was our understanding that the $ .08294 rate was established and required by the Department of Audit and Control.

Thanks to the persistence of one of our Bureau Chiefs, we have found that the Department of Audit and Control officially does not require the rate to be carried to the 5th decimal place. They have indicated that we may use $ .083 instead. Therefore, in the future please use the $ .083 rate.

John R. Clark

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VIEWS OF THE PRESS:

Kay, Otis, and Newby: They Sell Out Too

by Walter Shapiro

These days it has become easy for the press to come out on top in discussions of journalistic ethics—especially since their principal adversaries have been such discredited figures as Spiro Agnew and Richard Nixon. Add to this the crucial role played by the press in exposing the Watergate affair, and it is not hard to understand the current mood of self-righteousness at Katharine Graham's *Washington Post*, Otis Chandler's *Los Angeles Times*, and Newbold Noyes' Washington *Star-News*.

Walter Shapiro is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

Yet when it comes to integrity, these newspapers are not entirely above reproach. The aggressive performance of these papers' news pages has not been mirrored in their "back-of-the-book" sections like entertainment, food, travel, automobiles, and real estate.

Traditionally, these special sections which provide bulk for weekend editions have pretty much been taken for granted. Their occasional critics have focused almost exclusively on matters of corruption and conflict of interest. Recently, for example, *New York* magazine documented how Madison Square Garden funnels

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blocks of free tickets—in addition to press passes—to the sports sections of the city's three newspapers. And the willingness of many travel editors to swap a favorable mention in their column for an expensive vacation has long been notorious.

Emphasis on such obvious abuses creates all too facile moral dichotomies. In conversation, Walter Herman, who covers automobiles and real estate for Hearst's Baltimore *News-American*, casually drops lines like "when Volvo flew me to Sweden." Does this make him a villain? If so, doesn't it implicitly exonerate the *Post*, the L. A. *Times*, and the *Star-News*, which forbid such corporate largesse? While the special sections of these newspapers are free from such transparent conflicts of interest, they are also filled with manufactured news. Editors don't dig for stories, they are steered to them by energetic publicists. For example, the lengthy celebrity interview, mainstay of the entertainment section, is generally not assigned like a regular news story. All too often other articles that fill these sections aren't even staff-written. Instead, they are press releases hastily worked over by harried editors struggling to meet a deadline.

Nowhere are these abuses more apparent than in newspaper real estate sections. Faithful readers learn from them roughly as much about suburban sprawl and shoddy developers as devotees of *First Monday*, the official publication of the Republican National Committee, discovered about the crisis of confidence surrounding the presidency. Today's investigative reporters take their cues from turn-of-the-century muckrakers like Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell. Real estate editors, however, seem to have been inspired by Thumper the Rabbit, who said in Walt Disney's *Bambi*, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." This almost total abdication of journalistic responsibility is a national problem, but nowhere are the consequences more serious than in Washington and Los Angeles—two of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country.

A Case Study

Aaron Ruvinsky's article, "Yacht Club Begun at Ocean Pines," appeared on the front page of the October 26 Washington *Star-News* real estate section. The following excerpts convey its tone:

At Ocean Pines. . . 6,000 families owning lots and condominiums now can swim, play

Yacht Club Begun At Ocean Pines

By Aaron Ruvinsky
Star-News Staff Writer

Ocean Pines is almost the last of Boise Cascade's real estate properties remaining after the giant lumber company pulled itself out of a financial excavation by selling off most of its vast building empire.

At Ocean Pines — the 3,500-acre development across Isle of Wight and Assawoman Bays from Ocean City, Md. — 6,000 families owning lots and condominiums now can swim, play golf, tennis and paddle tennis, go horseback riding, dine, or enjoy camping or picnicking in a park.

By next summer the first 40 of 100 boat slips will help sailing enthusiasts to take advantage of the development's nine miles of waterfront. Del. Russell Hickman of Worcester County last Friday joined officials of the Boise Cascade Home & Land Corp. to break ground for a three-story structure that will include a yacht club, two restaurants and other facilities.

Completion is scheduled next summer for the 10,800-square-foot building, which will be the core of Ocean Pines' future downtown.

Within a few years, this 90-acre area called Mumford's Landing will include about 600 condominium dwellings designed by Robert Bradford Browne, a Miami architect who is responsible for some of the structures already in place at Ocean Pines. An inn and shopping center also are planned.

UNLIKE SOME vacation land developers, Boise Cascade doesn't emphasize investment as a reason for buying land at Ocean Pines. With land sales at the three-quarters mark, it is turning its attention increasingly toward the development's new town aspects.

With an area twice the size of Ocean City, officials have to be concerned with its impact on that long strip of shore; with its own Ocean Pines Association; with Worcester County authorities, and with the Maryland state government.

See OCEAN, E-17

golf, tennis or paddle tennis, go horseback riding, dine or enjoy camping or picnicking in a park.

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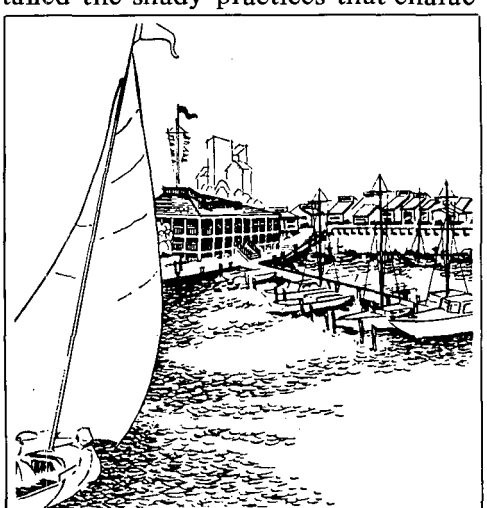
With land sales at the three-quarters mark, it is now turning its attention increasingly toward the development's new town aspects. . . .

One of Ocean Pines' proudest achievements is the 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones. Bob Hales is the resident pro, and Billy Casper, representing it as a touring pro, has one of the 54 condominium duplexes known as Borderlinks. . . .

Ocean Pines is reached by taking U. S. Route 50, 90, or 113 to Route 589—or by water through Assawoman Bay.

Boise Cascade and Ocean Pines, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, should be familiar to regular readers of *The Washington Monthly*. In November, 1972, William H. Rodgers, Jr., detailed the shady practices that characterized Boise Cascade's land dealings and led to their corporate Dunkirk—a $200-million retreat from the land development business. Ocean Pines remains within the corporate family, but its past is no more savory than that of the properties Boise discarded. Rodgers reported that an Ocean Pines lot located six feet under water was sold for $18,000—with $10,000 down. In 1972, the Maryland Real Estate Commission halted land sales for 90 days because some Ocean Pines salesmen had neglected to obtain real estate licenses.



Ocean Pines publicity sketch, reprinted in The Washington Star-News and The Baltimore Sun.

Some outside prodding prompted the *Star-News* decision to run an article on Ocean Pines. A week earlier, Aaron Ruvinsky and I had been part of a group that was flown 135 miles from Baltimore's Friendship Airport to witness the ground-breaking for Mumford's Landing, a so-called "destination resort" that was Phase II of the Ocean Pines story. The public relations firm that had organized this press junket also attracted Walter Herman of the Baltimore *News-American* and reporters from several suburban papers as well. The real estate editor of *The Baltimore Sun* had also planned to attend, but begged off at the last minute because of a family emergency.

The ground-breaking was an almost classic non-event. Like the rest of Ocean Pines, Mumford's Landing fronts on a brackish bay rather than the ocean. The crowd of about 100 that stood on the nondescript beach was a mixture of youthful Ocean Pines employees with corporate emblems on their blazers and retirees in golf caps who represented the local property owners. There was an Episcopal minister who prayed, "O, Lord, on this ground may the pleasures you have given be enhanced." And a septuagenarian state legislator gave a keynote address that focused on how he had once known someone named Mumford and they had dated the same girl during "the roaring twenties, which I doubt that many of you remember."

Walter Herman and I were then taken on a tour of Ocean Pines, which climaxed with our guide driving us down to the bay to show us "our last ocean-front lot." As we stood there on the barren, muddy ground, we were asked to look between two green stakes and envision how beautiful a home would look on the half-acre plot. All I could see was the highway bridge in the background and all I could think about was the $35,000 price-tag for just the land.

Meanwhile Back at the *Star-News*

Aaron Ruvinsky, a *Star-News* staff writer who has been with the paper

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for more than a decade, contributes regularly to the real estate section, occasionally handles church news, and until recently helped put out the garden page. He was quite startled to discover that I considered his article "puffery" for Ocean Pines. He pointed out that the lead mentioned how Boise Cascade had "pulled itself out of a financial excavation by selling off most of its vast building empire," and he was especially proud of the following two paragraphs from the breakover page:

> One-eighth of the property owners have built or begun homes. A few of these, unfortunately, are a jarring sight amid bare surroundings, not enough attention being paid to landscaping.
>
> For these reasons, Ocean Pines has tightened up provisions in the convenants homesite buyers are required to sign; only moral pressure can be used to line up those who have held their land for some time. . . .

Ruvinsky's feeling of self-satisfaction was somewhat justified. After carefully analyzing the real estate sections of more than 20 major newspapers, Ruvinsky's description of the houses at Ocean Pines as "a jarring sight amid bare surroundings" was virtually the only specific criticism I found of a particular development. And even Ruvinsky was careful to pull his punches. He made it clear that he was referring to only a "few" of the 500 homes, and added that Ocean Pines was now taking steps to improve its landscaping.

The tenor of the *Star-News* article cannot be attributed to a conflict of interest—round-trip air fare to Ocean City out-of-season and a non-alcoholic buffet lunch don't add up to much of a bribe—even if Ruvinsky did take his 13-year-old son along. Rather, the article reflects the non-adversary attitudes that real estate writers bring to their work. Ruvinsky, for example, knew little about the legal and ethical problems that helped speed Boise's downfall.

Although the values underlying the *Star-News* article are typical, Ruvinsky's on-the-spot research is not. Real estate writers don't always go out to look at a development themselves; instead, they often take a press agent's word for its wonders. This is perhaps inevitable, because most sections are one- and two-man operations. Editors have little choice but to fill their columns with copy provided by publicists. Lew Sichelman, real estate editor of the *Star-News*, likens his job to "putting out a small paper single-handedly."

The L. A. *Times* real estate section has a five-man staff, but it too depends heavily on hand-outs. Dick Turpin, the *Times*' real estate editor, explained that page-one stories on new developments indicate that "either we have gone out and looked at the opening ourselves, or we have gotten to know the builder over the past five years and are familiar with his work. There is a big element of trust involved—it helps, say, if I went to college with the PR guy."

The L. A. *Times* is typical in burying its real estate section deep in the Sunday paper. Things are done a bit differently in Washington, however. The *Star-News* real estate section comes out on Friday and the *Post*'s appears a day later—giving Katharine Graham the curious distinction of publishing the fattest Saturday paper in the world. The *Post*'s real estate section was never more conspicuous than on November 3. Subscribers who were expecting the latest word on the mounting pressures for the resignation of President Nixon found a hefty 48-page paper sitting on their doorsteps, but it was all real estate section. A wildcat printer's strike had prevented the publication of the rest of the paper.

Amazingly enough, this 48-page paper was essentially the work of one man—John Willmann, who has been *Post*'s real estate editor since 1960, when he left the city desk. Willmann doesn't work entirely alone; he shares a reporter with the financial section. Meanwhile, the *Post*'s newsroom teems with young, aggressive reporters struggling to get their stories into the

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tight Metro section.

Given this situation, Willmann's weakness for filler copy is perhaps understandable. Recent readers of his section were treated to a photo of "Sharon Eden, a student at the University of Maryland," who had "been selected Miss SMHBA" by the Suburban Maryland Home Builders Association. Generally, though, Willmann depends on his "stable of feature writers"—outside contributors who receive token payments for their work. Willmann declines to disclose his freelance budget "because I don't pay these people what they're worth."

The widely read November 3 real estate section, for example, featured an article by the executive vice president of the National Forest Products Association defending the recent report of the President's Advisory Panel on Timber and the Environment (on which he served) against charges by environmentalists that its recommendations would allow lumber interests to raid our national forests. This kind of dispassionate analysis is all too typical of Willmann's "stable." Among the contributors to a recent *Post* real estate section were the chairman of the Virginia Real Estate Commission, a former Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for Mortgage Credit, the president of the National Association of Home Builders, a veteran mortgage banker, and the area's largest builder. The real estate sections of other papers may tout local developers, but only *The Washington Post* serves as the house organ for the entire Home Building Establishment.

In all fairness, some of the articles that Willmann solicits are surprisingly good. An analysis of the trend toward converting older apartments into condominiums took pains to mention the problems of the elderly who cannot afford to purchase their own apartments. Like many real estate editors, Willmann has devoted a large portion of his section to unraveling the intricacies of the current mortgage market. Similarly, Lew Sichelman of the *Star-News* is particularly proud of an article he wrote on another general topic—the six percent commission charged by real estate brokers.

While these articles are undoubtedly a service to the potential home buyer, they cover topics far safer than an objective assessment of local developers. And all too often, the articles that Willmann publishes reflect little more than the parochial concerns of their authors. The primary purpose of a recent contribution by the president of the Northern Virginia Builders Association was to stress the integrity of local builders. Area residents who were aware of the suburban sprawl that has disfigured Northern Virginia must have been amused to read, "As the professional organization for builders in the Northern Virginia area, the NVBA actively promotes high standards to insure that home buyers can look with confidence to its members."

Editors like Willmann are willing captives of local real estate interests because they are acutely aware of their own lack of training in the field. None of the real estate editors I talked with considered himself an expert. For example, Dick Turpin had been education editor of the L. A. *Times*, Bill Manley of *The Milwaukee Journal* had been a general assignment reporter, and Carleton Jones of *The Baltimore Sun* was a former reporter who had spent 15 years in public relations.

One writer pinpointed the problem: "It isn't that we don't have standards in the real estate section; it's just that they aren't as high as the rest of the paper in terms of interest and freshness of the news." That's fine, but no real estate section carries a box stating, "Warning: the articles in this section are of limited news value and should be taken as reflecting only one side of the real estate picture." Obviously, real estate sections, which are printed several days before the rest of the paper, should not be expected to cover breaking news. But this does not excuse the failure of virtually every

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real estate editor in the country to criticize specific builders or developments. Bill Manley was typical when he explained his reluctance to evaluate new construction by saying, "I never felt that I was professionally qualified to make that kind of judgment." What would have happened if Woodward and Bernstein had said last year, "Because we are not licensed CPAs, we're not going to try to look into the financing of the Committee to Reelect the President"?

Who Said So?

Real estate sections are so dominated by the press release that editors actually take great pride in pointing out how many handouts they decide not to print. Dick Turpin defended the L. A. *Times*' kid-glove treatment of local developers by saying, "What you don't realize is that for every press release we run, we reject four others that merely tell how great a builder is." Instead of criticism, some real estate editors have resorted to informal blacklists. "If I find that some builder is not doing a satisfactory job," said Lew Sichelman, "he won't be mentioned in our real estate section." Just imagine what would happen if managing editors treated politicians the same way. Instead of probing the Nixon Administration, our major newspapers just would have stopped covering the President altogether as soon as the Watergate revelations made clear that he wasn't doing a satisfactory job.

To avoid running press releases, understaffed real estate editors frequently turn to wire service copy. Often this is scant improvement. Take Dorothea M. Brooks who writes regularly on real estate and related topics for UPI. Sometimes she is merely banal, as when she informed her readers in 1971 that "the second home is an accepted fact of American life today," and again when she recently announced that the private backyard tennis court is the "in thing" this year. She is also the master of the disguised press release. In a UPI dispatch this fall, she discussed how a retired Army nurse and a beautician had constructed their "dream houses" by supplementing their cash with "sweat equity" in the form of their own labor. Then came the plug: "Each. . . worked through a division of Evans Products Co., Portland, Ore., whose Home Groups will erect a house on a customer's lot anywhere in any of the 50 states." A quote was used to reinforce the message: "Sweat equity and affordable financing are the elements that make Evans unique. . . . " Who said so? William Schmidt, the manager of corporate communications for Evans Products, that's who.

The "who said so?" test is usually the easiest way to spot rewritten press releases. "Condominiums and planned communities are less likely targets for rising crime rates." Who said so? A condominium developer quoted in *The Atlanta Journal & Constitution*. "Second mortgages are seen as a way of coping with the high cost of interest." Who said so? The president of C.I.T. Financial Services, quoted in the Baltimore *News-American*. "Siding may save a move." Who said so? Alcan Aluminum Corp., quoted in *The Baltimore Sun*.

And a Partridge in a Pear Tree

A standard critique of newspaper journalism is that in its emphasis on discrete events, it fails to give proper attention to long-term trends and stories that don't neatly fit the formula, "The Governor announced yesterday. . . ." Real estate sections, however, carry this formula to absurd lengths. Rather than surveying the entire housing market, they merely highlight new construction.

The L. A. *Times* is perhaps the worst offender. Reflecting the boosterism of Southern California, its real estate section is totally dominated by condominium openings and new tract housing. A recent issue featured separate articles on five new housing developments, four new condominiums,

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Puffery-Hearst Style

With the 1966 demise of *The New York Journal-American*, the flagship of the Hearst Empire, press critics began to ignore the abuses of what was once America's most notorious newspaper chain. That's why A. J. Liebling fans will be gratified to know that the most conspicuous recent example of continuing favoritism to a single builder appeared in the Baltimore *News-American*, a Hearst paper.

On October 7, its tabloid "Move Up to Better Living" section profiled Marianne Schmidt, an interior decorator for Ryland Homes. Such lines as "Mrs. Schmidt is a stunningly beautiful woman. . . . She was taught good taste by her musician father and home-maker mother while growing up on a farm in Watsontown, Pa.," indicate that this was the work of a publicist of rare inventiveness. The following Sunday, the front page of the tabloid heralded the opening of "Ryland Home's two-story, four-bedroom model, "The Raleigh."

The seeds of all this puffery soon blossomed when "Ryland Homes in Anne Arundel County" placed a half-page ad in the October 21 real estate section. Coincidentally, the section's lead story featured "four new model homes. . . unveiled by the Ryland Group in West Riding, one of the most desired communities near Bel Air. . . . " Three weeks of this kind of hucksterism must have been exhausting for all concerned, because on the last Sunday of the month, all they could come up with was just one small article on an inside page, "Ryland Home's Photo Contest Ends Nov. 15."

four new motels, three new shopping centers, two new townhouse developments, two new office buildings, two new stores, a new factory, and two miscellaneous projects—including a new Bob Hope USO Club.

The front-page leads in the L. A. *Times* often sound as though they were lifted directly from the builder's press kit. One recently began, "Seagate, a new community of waterfront townhouses designed for a leisurely life of sun and sea, opens today in Huntington Harbor." And another started, "Thriving orange groves border Sunhollow, a new community of 178 single-family detached homes opening today in San Juan Capistrano."

Dick Turpin justifies this puffery as "a public service for buyers." But is it really? Readers of the *Times* real estate section are buried in facts that cry out for some interpretative detail. The section may state that "kitchens have built-in appliances, hardwood cabinets, trash compactor, dishwasher, waste disposer, stainless steel sink, and pantry," but it provides few clues for a potential home buyer to tell if this will be a pleasant room in which to cook and eat.

With their stress on new construction, real estate sections ignore those who want to rent rather than buy. The only article I saw on apartment living appeared in *The Hartford Courant*, and suggested that "if you're a prodder, try producing a newsletter for your building or complex. . . . Its chatty informality introduces tenants to one another in print. . . . "

This total preoccupation with new construction betrays the origins of newspaper real estate sections. On most papers they began as an advertising supplement with editorial copy provided by advertisers and the editing done by the newspaper's business staff. This arrangement was eventually abandoned by most papers, I suspect, more because it was a burden

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on the business staff than because the arrangement offended anyone's moral sensibilities.

The only real critique of real estate sections that I came across was written for *The Columbia Journalism Review* in 1966 by Ferdinand Kuhn. Kuhn, a former *Washington Post* reporter, argued that not only was it repugnant to accommodate advertisers in news columns, but it was also unnecessary, since builders and realtors really had nowhere else to go.

The Kuhn article inspired the National Association of Real Estate Editors to add a self-criticism session to its annual convention, but it is easy to overstate the impact of this. The mores of the profession are illustrated by *The Houston Chronicle*, whose real estate editor is currently president of the association. Each Sunday the *Chronicle* runs three separate full-color advertising sections—"Your Home," "Your Townhouse," and "Apartment Guide." Although the editorial copy runs on the order of "Roman Forest will truly be a spectacular and fulfilling place to live," there is no indication on the front pages of these sections that this is advertising copy. Inside, the words "classified display" do appear at the top of each page, but in agate type. Where's the real estate news? Buried within the sports section, it is part of something called "Business-oil-financial-farm-real estate," which runs opposite "The Lifebeat Page," featuring "Local Deaths."

Real estate editors often derive considerable consolation from remembering how bad things used to be. Dick Turpin took great pains to sketch out for me the situation at the L. A. *Times* when he became real estate editor in 1967:

> For many, many years this newspaper had run this real estate section from the point of view of the advertising department. In 1967, the management of the paper decided to take the section away from advertising. When I took over I was told that I was free to run stories regardless of whether the builder advertises or not. In the past, if you were a good, solid advertiser, you were in the real estate section every week or every month.
>
> I was instructed that no one in advertising would tell me what to run or what not to run. The first year or two were tough since I insisted that any story that came through a builder or a PR man had to be submitted to me rather than to the advertising department. Advertising began telling builders, "If you've got a story, submit it to Turpin, and if it's really a story he'll print it."

The real estate editors of the *Post* and the *Star-News* also claim to be entirely free of advertiser pressure, but it is interesting to note how gingerly they treat the area's largest home builder. In early September the *Post* gave a guest column to C. G. Yeonas, the "head of the top-volume Yeonas Co. . . . a leader in the business in this area and also. . . recognized nationally." Yeonas contended that the proposed warranty program of the National Association of Home Builders was unnecessary because only five per cent of this country's builders are guilty of any shoddy workmanship. He used this as a springboard to discuss Yeonas Co.'s program of "constant, rigid, controlled, and thorough" inspection in the homes they build. And Yeonas ended by assuring potential home buyers that they "can look forward to redoubled efforts on the part of reputable builders to avert or rectify, as far as is humanly and economically possible, valid complaints."

A week before the *Star-News* published the Ocean Pines story, it ran a press release on page three of its real estate section under the headline, "Yeonas Wants to Stay No. 1." Although Lew Sichelman gamely tried to explain its news value, it's hard to find a journalistic rationale for copy like this:

> At a time when many builders are searching for greener pastures on which to do their thing, the Yeonas Co. is determined to maintain a growth rate which has kept it in the No. 1 spot among home builders for two years.
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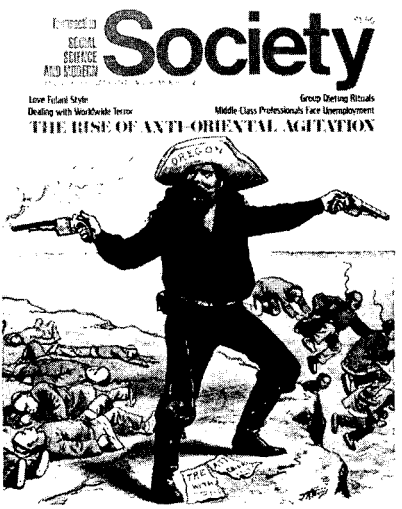

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It is clear that Chandler, Noyes, and Mrs. Graham would never allow publicists to shape or influence what appears on the front pages of their papers. Things are different in the back of the book. These sections owe their very existence not to journalistic decisions but to commercial interests. We have food pages because there are food advertisers, and real estate sections because of the developers.

The irony is that the topics treated in this space-filling way—where we live, what we eat, how we spend our money—touch us more closely than much of what's on the front page. They are precisely the things that newspapers should be devoting special sections to. But not the kind of sections we know today, which, even when they come through with a bit of information about the mortgage rate, almost never step back to examine the totality of our relationship with the bank, or the insurance company, or the doctor, or the schools. Instead, we need special coverage, defined not by advertising but by the real-life problems people face. The real estate pages should tell us what's right and wrong with the way we're housed, and the health and education sections should help us evaluate our schools and hospitals. Most papers don't even have a health section—not because the readers aren't concerned, but because doctors can't advertise.

More than any other institution in our society, the press can provide the average man with the information he needs to find out how he is being screwed. But as long as sections like real estate are "handout heaven," we will go on knowing more about military coups in Chile than real estate coups in our own backyard.

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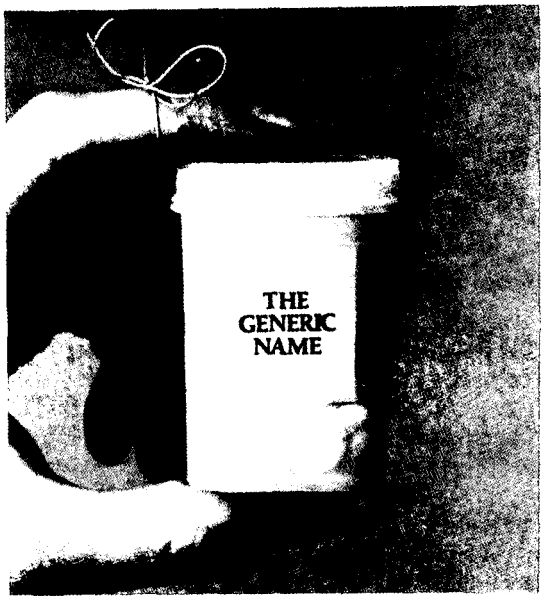

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Public affairs books to be published in December.

Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism. Alonzo L. Hamby. Columbia, $12.95.

Black Power/White Control: The Struggle of the Woodlawn Organization in Chicago. John Hall Fish. Princeton, $12.50. The Woodlawn Association became a major force in the 1960s for community control. The movement has succeeded in surviving countless bouts with Chicago-style reform and deceptively generous federal aid programs, but that's about all. John Hall Fish has written a convincing, well-documented case for the planting of a future decentralized neighborhood, which, he believes, in spite of major setbacks, will eventually grow from this concerted effort.

Discrimination in Labor Markets. Orley Ashenfelter, Albert Rees, eds. Princeton, $9.

The High Society. Mort Gerberg. Warner, $.95.

A History of Regulatory Taxation. R. Alton Lee. Univ. Press of Kentucky, $15.25.

Just About Everyone Versus Howard Hughes. David B. Tinnin. Doubleday, $10.

The Other Side of Gun Control. Robert J. Kukla. Stackpole, $8.95. Purports to be a documentary history of gun control and the arguments on both sides, but almost at once the author strips off his cloak of respectability and reveals NRA thinking in all its nakedness: "The focus has now been successfully directed away from the assassin in Dallas. It has for years since remained upon the lawful firearms of law-respecting Americans in their homes, in the field, and on the shooting ranges, and not upon the distorted minds and actions of a puny little communist assassin and his likes."

Politics and the Housing Crisis Since 1930. Nathaniel S. Keith. Universe, $3.50. An intelligent history of government housing programs by a former FHA and urban renewal official. Unfortunately the author is the kind of conventional liberal who does not want to deal with the complex reasons for ugliness, monotony, and failure in so much of public housing.

Pornography and Sexual Deviance. Michael J. Goldstein, Harold S. Kant. Univ. of California, $7.95. A thorough piece of social science research into the effects of pornography on sexual behavior, concluding that

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exposure to erotica of all kinds tends only to reinforce behavior patterns, rather than initiating them. A homosexual thus perceives heterosexual erotica metaphorically, in terms of his own desires, and vice versa. An important study, since the Supreme Court opinions hinge on the belief that pornography may induce anti-social behavior.

President Nixon's Psychiatric Profile. Eli S. Chesen, M.D. Wyden, $6.95. This shallow quickie seeks to capitalize on the nation's worry about a possible Presidential crack-up. The author gives us this illumination: "My major concern would be about any hypothetical situation in which Nixon was greatly threatened on both levels, personal and international. Such a dual crisis could present risk."

The Rights of Students. American Civil Liberties Union. Avon, $1.25.

The Rights of Women. American Civil Liberties Union. Avon, $1.25.

The Rules of Riot: Internal Conflict and the Law of War. James E. Bond. Princeton, $11.50.

Stay of Execution. Stewart Alsop. Lippincott, $8.95. The columnist tells of his recent struggle against leukemia, with flashbacks to earlier years. Presented almost as a throwaway—the subtitle is "A Sort of Memoir"—it is a truly memorable book. The author emerges as a bit of an establishment snob but thoroughly likable anyway.

Superpower: A Portrait of America in the 70s. Robert Hargreaves. St. Martin's, $10. This domestic version of Anthony Sampson's *Anatomy of Britain* is so intelligently done, so rarely wrong in interpretation, that it almost makes you forget the basic question: why was it written at all? Hargreaves' composite "portrait" is made up of high-quality journalistic snapshots of every conceivable facet of the American face, from the defense budget to the Mafia, to the mores of Madison Avenue to the madness of Los Angeles. All this is fine and would make a much-appreciated gift for newcomers to the country, but if you've kept up with the newspapers and magazines for the last few years, you will find virtually nothing new in the book.

Toma: The Compassionate Cop. David Toma with Michael Brett. Putnam, $6.95.

What Washington Said: Administration Rhetoric and the Vietnam War 1949-1969. F. M. Kail. Harper Torchbook, $3.95. Useful compilation of official American statements on Vietnam over the past quarter century. Each new line of reasoning, the author says, "was advanced to further one argument: that America had to do exactly what it was doing in Southeast Asia."

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